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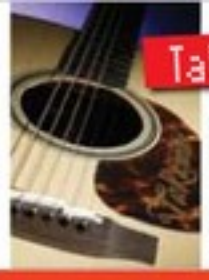
ES-175 & ES-135

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Guitar

June 2007
Vol 18 No 5 £3.99

& BASS MAGAZINE

Fender's Tele Reborn

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6 of the best on test

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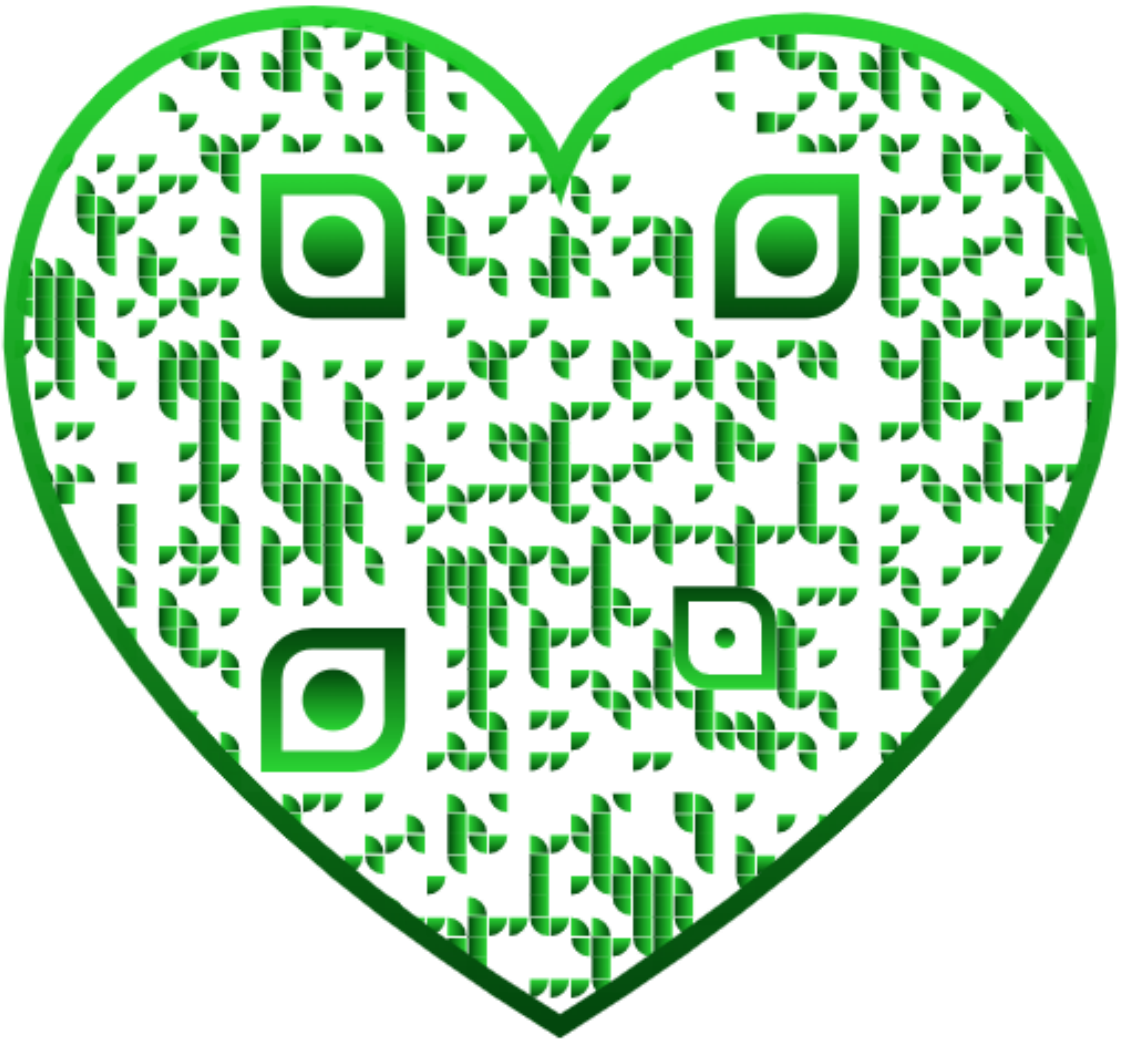

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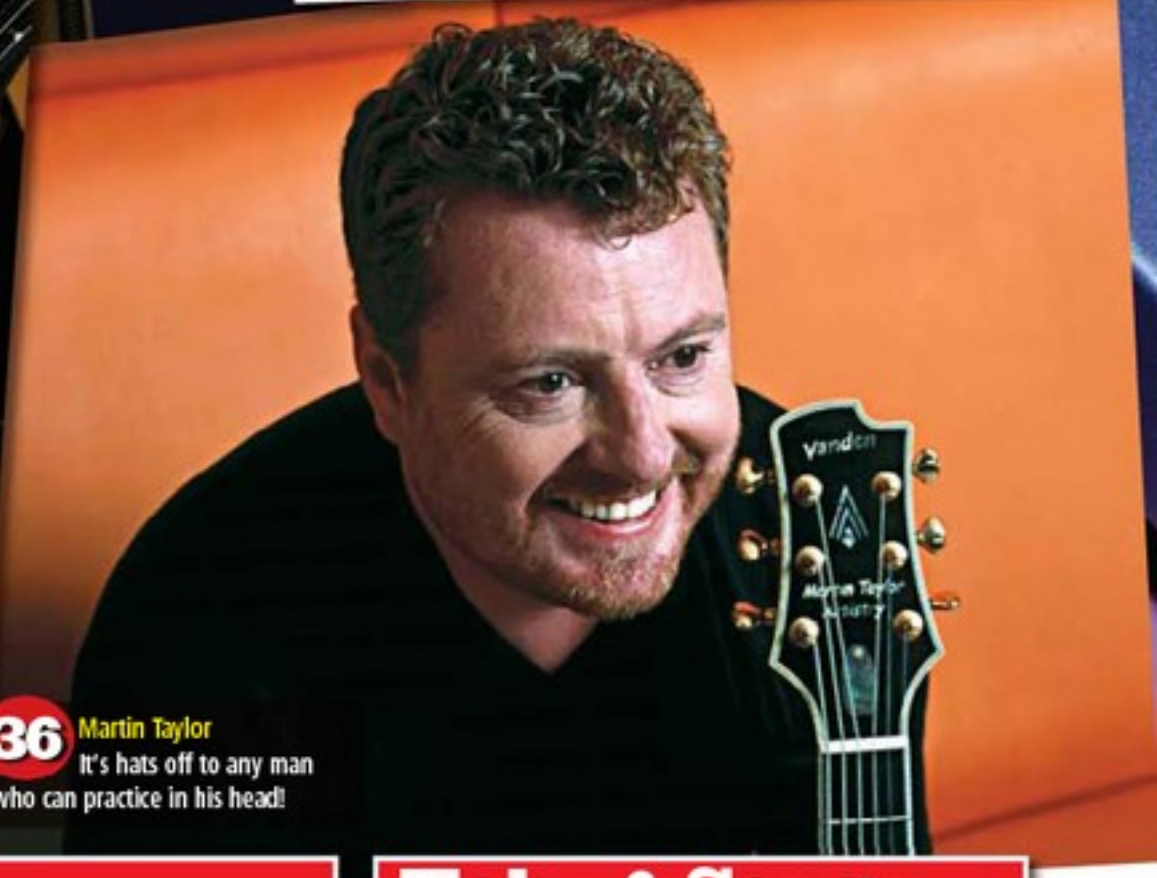

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June 2007
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Sooner or later Fender had to wake up to the fact that its past showed the way forward. It's nearly 30 years since the reissues programme was born, and the Telecaster was where it all started

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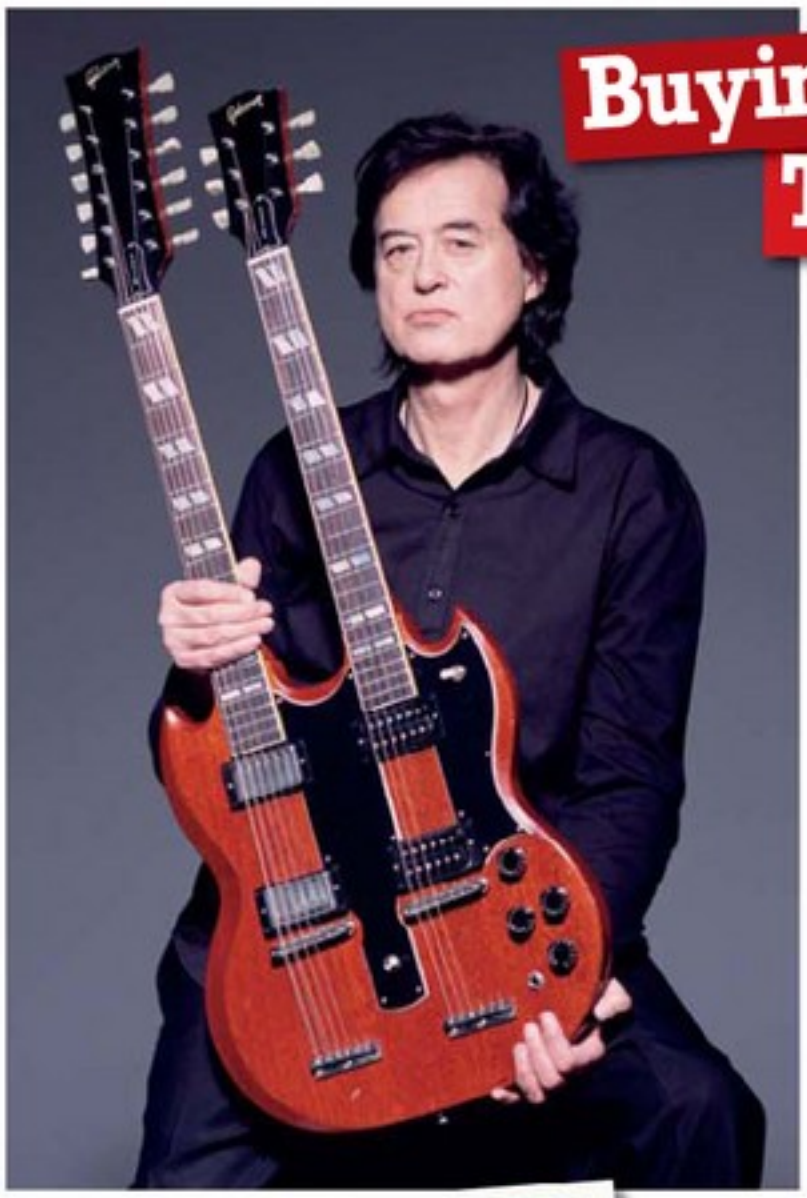
Over 900 reviews and articles have appeared in *Guitar* since 2000, and they're available both individually and rather cleverly compiled in books from www.guitarmagazine.co.uk

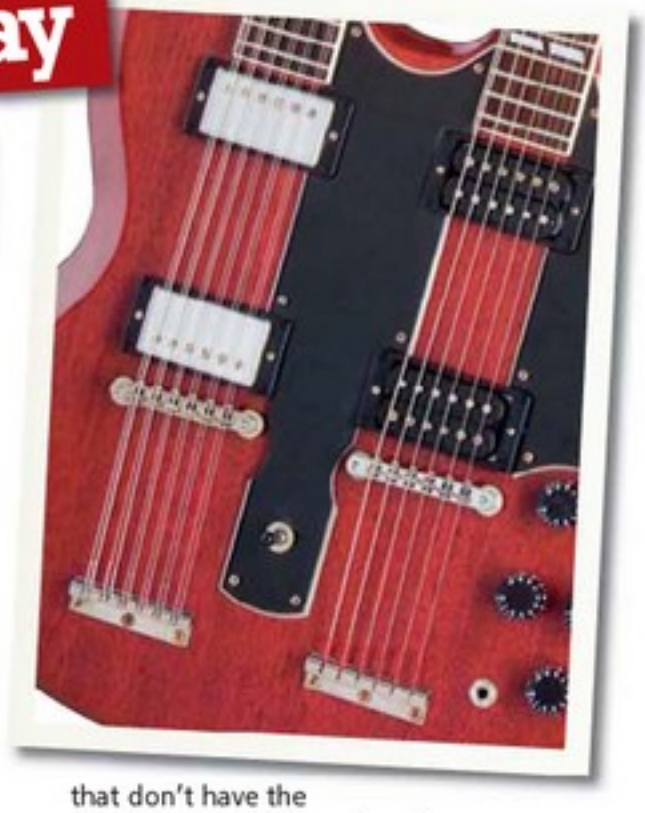
COVER PHOTO: HANK MARVIN by Dezo Hoffman/Rex Features INSET: Lars Mullen

Woke Up This Mornin'

... on the cover of Guitar & Bass. Then woke up properly



Buying A Stairway To Heaven



If you want to get that Led Zep tone down pat, now is your chance. The Gibson Jimmy Page Signature Double Neck is a precise copy of Mr Page's original EDS-1275 and replicates every detail, ding for ding. The weathered Heritage Cherry finish is unique to the new model, and will be aged by the Custom Shop. Each of the guitars will feature a certificate of authenticity signed by Page, a specially-designed Custom Shop case and an acclaimed two-DVD Led Zeppelin box set. You'll even get a copy of a private interview with Page chatting about the new guitar. The problem is that they're only making 25 of them, only one of those will get to the UK, and it will be *very* expensive. Some help is at hand: Gibson has also produced 250 Vintage Original Spec Signature Double Necks that don't have the aging or the signature, but do come with a certificate of authenticity. These will be a little more affordable but still quite scarce, with only four expected to arrive over here. If you do miss out, you can console yourself with the knowledge that you've probably saved yourself a packet on osteopath bills. Contact Rosetti on 01376 550033.

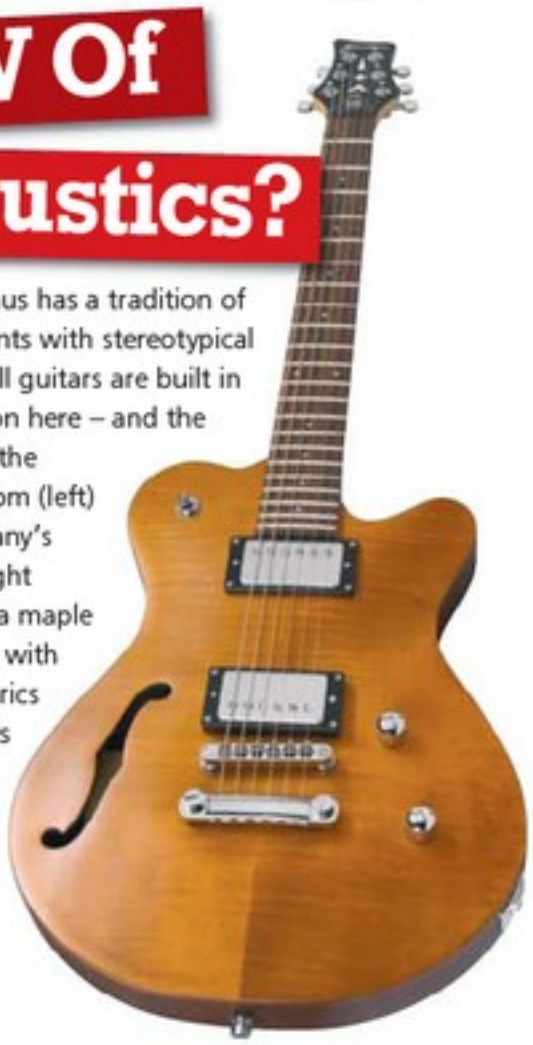
Modest Marr Tops US Chart

We Were Dead Even Before The Ship Sank went straight to No.1 at the end of March, beating the outfit's previous best placing of 18 by a country mile. Marr was asked to play on the album in a letter sent by band leader and Smiths fan Isaac Brock. The two met up and clicked to such a degree that Johnny was eventually offered a permanent place. Modest Mouse's early albums gained critical acclaim and are revered by self-righteous hipsters who are disappointed at the more commercial direction Brock has pursed since being signed by a major label.

Darlings of the American indie scene Modest Mouse find themselves on top of the US album chart with the hullabaloo surrounding Smiths legend Johnny Marr joining the band, quite possibly, a significant factor. The band's fifth long player

The BMW Of Semi-Acoustics?

German manufacturer Framus has a tradition of building elegant instruments with stereotypical precision and efficiency. All guitars are built in Germany – no offshore production here – and the Panthera Classic Pro (right) and the sunburst Panthera Classic Custom (left) are fine examples of the company's craft. The Classics have lightweight hollow mahogany bodies with a maple top. The neck is bolt-on maple with a rosewood fingerboard. Electrics include two Duncan SH-1 '59s and feedback, we're told, is not an issue. Prices from £1029. Call 0161 2146 161 or see www.framus.com



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Winner of a Guitar Award for best value acoustic under £1000. Send your details on a postcard to Vintage Draw, PO Box 531, Croydon CR9 2ZA by 1 July 2007.

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LAYOUT: Good, with hidden depths at the back where you can go for acoustics, electric keyboards and trying stuff out

STAFF HELPFULNESS: Very friendly and helpful, even to a self-declared timewaster

RANGE OF NEW GEAR: Good selection across the board, with a range of most gear and price you might need, if not the particular brand you might have been looking for. They have a nice wall of guitars with a Gibson Les Paul at £1399, a JDX dreadnought for £149, Deacon F-type and Westfield Warwick-style basses around £199, Washburn and other acoustics (mostly inexpensive), Rickenbacker, Freshman, Vintage, a Fender Standard Tele at £699, Squier, PRS, Epiphone and Marshall, plus some ringers in the way of banjos, mandolins, accordions and violin kits. You can also get an Airline radio mic for £179, Casios and other keyboards, a Korg D3200 multitracker reduced to £799 from £999, PA gear, LP percussion, and they'll order stuff in, too. Effects include DOD, Zoom, Line 6, Marshall and Peavey. Kits by Ashton, Tama, Stagg. Good range of accessories. Repairs in own workshop

RANGE OF SECONDHAND GEAR: it depends entirely on what's come in

BEST BARGAIN IN THE STORE: solid dark red secondhand Les Paul from a known background in really good condition for £699 inc. case

CONCLUSION: Good quality local store

VITAL STATISTICS

Layout	15/20
Staff knowledge	18/20
Staff helpfulness	18/20
Range of new gear	17/20
Range of secondhand gear	10/20
Parking	Yes, nearby
TOTAL	78%

CONTACT: 01592 268222
293 High Street, Kirkcaldy, Fife KY1 1JH
www.hskmusic.com

In Brief

Legal Tab Site Mooted

Illegal tab sites, often with laughably inaccurate tab, have been rife for years. Now, in a ground-breaking move, www.mxtabs.net plans to go legit. Tab will remain free with participating publishers receiving a part of the advertising revenue. Few are convinced it'll work, but the launch is expected by August

Brainboxes love Slayer

A survey of students at the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth found that the favourite soundtrack of young Einsteins is not cerebral sounds like jazz or classical, but thrash metal, with Slayer and Slipknot coming out tops. Start your kids shredding now: a Nobel prize beckons!

New Brummie Show

The Midlands Guitar Show hits Birmingham for the first time on Sunday 3 June from 10 to 4.30pm. There'll be demos by Laney, Ibanez and Patrick Eggle and all your favourite show shenanigans. The venue is Cocks Moors Woods Leisure Centre, Alcester Rd South, Kings Heath, B14 6ER; entry is £5. See www.guitarshows.co.uk. or call 01925 813185 for details

Cash For Your Songs

The International Songwriting Competition (ISC) is the biggest contest of its type. 56 winners from around the globe will share more than $150,000 in cash for their 2006 efforts including a Grand Prize of $25,000. Entries for 2007 are now being taken. See www.songwritingcompetition.com for more details

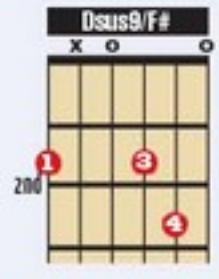
Maiden Journey

Metalheads from as far afield as Iran, Egypt and Palestine flocked to the Dubai Desert Rock Festival to see Iron Maiden play their very first gig in the Middle East – and there wasn't a hint of disharmony as the band let rip with their songs of war, religion and bringing your daughter to the slaughter. It was then on to more virgin territory for Maiden, playing to 20,000 fans in Bangalore, India. Their latest album beat off more traditional fare to notch up a No. 2 spot in India last year, the highest position ever reached by a rock act. Even the elephants, it seems, are growing fond of Britain's best-loved head-banging veterans.

Virtual Hendrix

Modelling experts IK Multimedia have studied the original rigs used by Hendrix and put together an 'ultimate software package' covering every aspect of Jimi's sound. Extremely rare vintage stompboxes, amp heads and cabs were all hunted down and replicated in digital form. The Amplitube 2 Jimi Hendrix Edition also bears the endorsement of Authentic Hendrix, the company founded by Jimi's Dad, Al. It'll cost £159, or if you need an interface they'll throw in the Stealth Plug for an extra £40. See www.amplitube.com or call 0800 0934066.

The Lost Chord

This chord is essentially Dsus9 on the top four strings, plus F# on the bottom string. The chord on the top four strings is neither major nor minor since it does not contain a third, but the F# on the bottom string makes it major since F# is the major third in the key of D. Goddit?

Web Watch

There are few pages on the web that can rival the comprehensive guitar coverage offered by this US site. The news, on bands and gear, is updated daily; there's guitar tab, and lessons with advice and comment. Then there are also enough forums and artist interviews to keep you squinting at your monitor for hours on end.

Enter The Dragon

Just what the doctor ordered, the Dragonfly personal Stethoscope Amp requires no power or batteries to produce studio quality, natural clean tone direct into your lug-holes every time. Suction cups attach to the back of your guitar: apart from that, the device is basically an upgraded version of your standard medical stethoscope. US soldiers in Iraq apparently love the Dragonfly because it allows them to amp their guitars in an environment where batteries are scarce and electricity is often unavailable. It's also cheap – only $24.95 from www.truenorthmusicproductions.com. Email robert.cerone@verizon.net for info.

Warriors Come Out To Play

Rick Derringer is proud to endorse Warrior Guitars, an American company which is scarily evangelical about making custom guitars for the discerning player. According to its website the plan is to 'impact the globe with art that breathes the tone of abundance'. If you dare to mix with such guitar fanatics, go to www.warriorguitar.com and place your order.

In Brief

Reading/Leeds lineup

Always a good marker on who's hot on the alternative rock scene, the Carling Weekender festival this year has chosen Razorlight, Red Hot Chili Peppers and Smashing Pumpkins as headliners. Dozens of other acts such as Bloc Party, Kings Of Leon and Fall Out Boy add to the fun from August 24-26. See www.reading festival.com or call 0870 060 3775. Day tickets are available at £62.50, but weekend tickets are already sold out

Crossroads Revisited

Eric Clapton has put together his second Crossroads Guitar Festival. The first event was held in the US back in 2004, and again Europe misses out as top guitar players that Clapton 'admires and respects' congregate, for one night only, in Bridgeview near Chicago on 28 July. Robert Cray, Buddy Guy, Jeff Beck, Jimmie Vaughan, BB King and John McLaughlin are only a few of those taking part with unusual collaborations being planned to help squeeze the acts in

Alternative Guitar Fest

The All Tomorrow's Parties festivals always feature weird and wonderful bands, and May's event promises to be another smorgasbord of atonal guitar action. Early ticket buyers were invited to vote their favourite bands onto the bill, and as a result Johnny Marr's Modest Mouse, Mogwai, Explosions In The Sky and Yo La Tengo will all be wigging out in an art-rock fashion. Butlins in Maidenhead is the unlikely venue on 18-20 May. See www.aptfestival.com

I WANT TO SOUND LIKE...

Pete Townshend

THE SOUND

My Generation and *Who Are You* boast the pop/rock fury dynamics that are the Mod veterans' trademark – it even holds true throughout rock opera *Tommy*. Townshend's rhythm-orientated guitar style was informed by a combination of, amongst others, jazz virtuoso Wes Montgomery, country picker Chet Atkins, and bluesman Bo Diddley. Every indie kid with a natty suit and a sharp guitar sound owes Townshend at least a fiver.

THE KIT

A **Gretsch Country Gentlemen** influenced the classic tune *Won't Get Fooled Again*, while a **Gibson Flying V** inspired *The Who By Numbers* album. Early on, Townshend used a chiming **Rickenbacker 12-string** with menaces on the likes of *I Can't Explain*, but from '68-'71 his main squeeze was a **Gibson SG Special**, which is what you hear on *Live At Leeds*. If you want the man's amp sound, get a **Fender Bassman** or a **Hiwatt CP103**. Also grab a good **fuzz**, **tremolo** and **volume** pedal: you'll be needing them a lot.

IN THE STUDIO

Learn from Townshend that mic placement is everything (including sticking one right up against the strings to capture the clicking of the pick). Secondly, if you're recording live, it's important to isolate your amp to retain its punch. This can be done by placing it in a different room or by putting it on a box and wrapping it in blankets to minimise the vibrations.

THE TECHNIQUE

Townshend's always loved suspended chords and powerchords. If a C chord consists of C (root), E (third), and G (fifth), then a Csus4 would be C, F (fourth) and G, and the powerchord version would just be C and G. Suspended chords give a folky feel, while powerchords have become THE rock'n'roll chord. Also, learn tremolo picking, where your picking hand is powered more by your arm than your wrist. Check out *Anytime, Anyhow, Anywhere* for reference.

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Boss Space Echo RE-20 £151

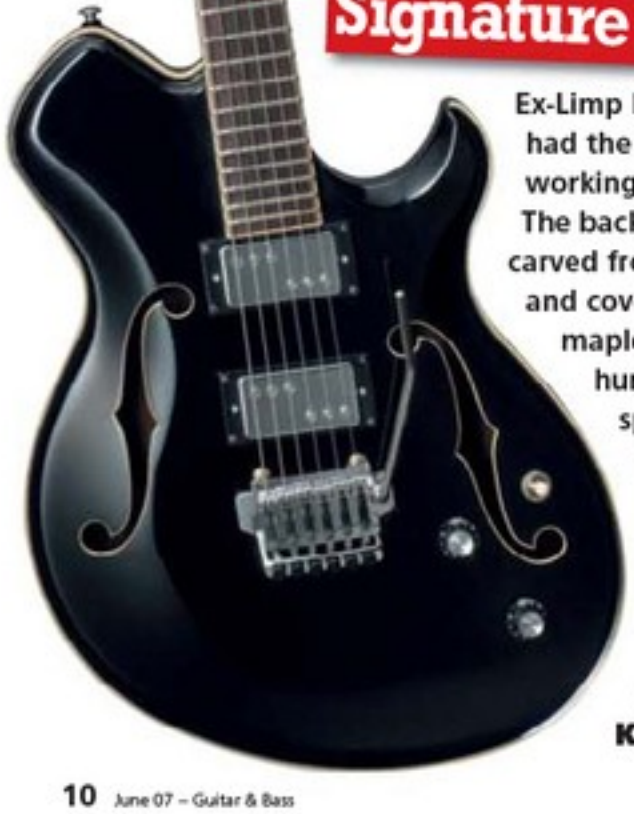
The legendary Roland Space Echo has been reborn as a more compact, digital twin-effect pedal with a much longer delay time. The original, which emerged in 1973 housed in an amp-head sized box, remains much sought after, but Boss says every sonic nuance of the classic tape echo has been captured, including magnetic head sound saturation and tape flutter. The expression pedal also adds a whole new dimension.

Contact: Roland UK 01792 702701

DiMarzio D Activator £65 each

DiMarzio has come up with a passive humbucker that captures the characteristics of the best hard-rockin' active pickups but eliminates the disadvantages, like limited dynamics and the need for batteries. The D Activator was developed specially for the very metal Ibanez X Series but is now available for retro-fitting in all DiMarzio colours, plus Chrome Tops and the new Camouflage finish.

Contact: MI Rep 01404 822699



Yamaha Wes Borland Signature £1299

Ex-Limp Bizkit man Borland has had the Yamaha Custom Shop working hard on his dream guitar. The back, sides and centre block are carved from a single piece of alder and covered with a two-piece maple top. The Custom33 split humbuckers were designed specifically for Borland, and the CV820WB also has Yamaha's Finger Clamp tremolo system and locking nut for super-swift string changing.

Contact: Yamaha Kemble 01908 366700

Crate FlexWave FW15R £79

Crate's FlexWave amp series ranges from the single channel 15W reverb combo shown below right up to a 120W head at £299. The 65W-and-upwards amps get digital effects and three channels; all get the patented FlexWave Evolution 5 preamp for fine solid state tone and excellent reliability.

Contact: Sound Control 0191 232 4175

Gibson SG Special Faded 3 £624

Gibson's new Special Faded guitars offer box-fresh efficiency and rock-readiness with a fashionable hint of road-rash. This Worn White finish certainly looks the business, or you can choose the Worn Ebony instead. Neck and body are the standard mahogany but the unusual six-way rotary selector with chickenhead knob adds a novel touch to a classic format, while the meaty 490R humbuckers offer plenty of punch, aiming this guitar squarely at rock, metal and blues players.

Contact: Rosetti 01376 550033

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Budget Blues

You have to start collecting guitars at some time – and Gavin Redshaw has been bitten by the bug early

My name is Gavin and I'm 13 3/4. I've been playing guitar for four years. My style is mostly Chicago blues, and I model my music on JB Hutto. I've learnt a lot from *Guitar & Bass*, which I get every month.

I started working on guitars by repairing the ones at school, as they were getting trashed every week. My dad inspired me to have a look for some projects, so I bought a 1978 Marlin Sidewinder for £52, renovated it, and sold it for £125 to a school friend. It was the profit from this, all my pocket money, birthday and Christmas money that has funded the other guitars. Now I specialise in old catalogue guitars as I can pick them up cheap as projects off eBay.

The white guitar I'm holding is a Teisco MJ-2 and was purchased for £149 as a pair with the Antoria 994 (bottom left in the group picture). This Teisco was not in good shape; her original 'light' switches were missing, and the previous owner had turned her into a bass! The bridge pickup is dead but this has not dampened her spirit to rock with one neck pickup. You might notice that the Antoria has only three strings – I have been inspired by Seasick Steve! This guitar was sold by JT Coppock in the 1963 catalogue for £40. It sounds great and has most of the original parts.

The red 1966 National/Valco JB Hutto Airline I half-own with my dad. We bought it from Texas. It cost us £562 on eBay and I have to say that this is how my dream guitar sounds.

'My Sakai had been screwed to a pub wall. I fixed it using wood filler and nail varnish'

The 1950's f-hole acoustic has a beautiful deep, broad tone. It has no branding so it's a bit of a mystery. When I bought it for £50 the neck was separated from the body, but I glued it back into place. Also the tuning pegs were bent and snapped and are replaced with Gibson machineheads.

Next to the Antoria is my Sakai, which has had an extraordinary life; it had been screwed to a pub wall. I fixed it using wood filler and nail varnish. I bought it for £25 but it is the best thing with a single pickup I have ever heard.

My bass is a Kay from 1969 and the Les Paul shape is unusual. This is another eBay buy for £68.50 and is complete except for the missing thumbrest. The tones on this are completely different with even a slight turn on the tone knob. It just shows that guitars and basses can come better than new when they are 40 years old, and they come a hell of a lot cheaper!

The Telecaster-shaped guitar was a copy that I traded a Lab Series amp for (the Roland VGA amp was a special surprise present from my dad's boss). I had a vision to put in some old retro pickups, so I found a 1961 Broadway scratchplate with electronics. I routed out the body to fit and cut off half the bridge pickup plate so I was just left with the bridge and saddle bits. Then I finished it off with a Jazz Bass bridge cover and touched up the old holes with some car spray. Finally I created the Redshaw BroadTone!

Got a story about one of your guitars or a guitar-crammed experience? A gig, an event, an unlikely happening with strings attached?
Send it to Open Mic, Guitar, Leon House, 233 High Street, Croydon CR9 1HZ. Around 700 words will do nicely – and we must have a photo please!

Press Play

Made a demo? Produced your own CD? Here's the pick of the crop that landed on our desk this month

Send to: Press Play, Guitar & Bass Magazine Leon House, 233 High Street, Croydon CR9 1HZ

Waking The Witch: Boys From The Abattoir

Boys From The Abattoir is a blend of rock, folk and pop that carries its influences but can't be squeezed into a convenient pigeonhole. Waking The Witch are from West Yorkshire and the quality of playing, songs and production is top-notch. Curiously, the track *Rock N Roll* is a ballad, while *Me Leaving Me* is a pumping guitar-driven anthem – and yes, that actually is Big Country's Bruce Watson on lead! Elsewhere you'll come across mandolins and Sundays-style guitarisms. The flier suggests they tour a lot, so try and catch them.
www.wakingthewitch.co.uk

Visit www.guitarmagazine.co.uk to hear *Me Leaving Me*

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emails letters photos

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STAR LETTER

TEENAGE KICKS

Just a note to thank you for your *Wired For Sound* article last issue (cover feature, 18/4). It was superb, and it brought back loads of memories. My first amp was indeed a Watkins Dominator, but I used it for bass! This was in 1960-'61 and it did the job remarkably well, although the venues were generally small. I was particularly interested in Joe Brown's comment re. The Shadows' Vox cabinets housing Fender amps. In 1962, shortly after a Cliff & The Shadows concert in Glasgow, I was in McCormacks music store chatting to a salesman who told me they had had to open up their repair shop to do work on a problem with one of The Shads amps – and, surprise, surprise, there was a Fender chassis inside. There might be some truth in Joe's 'mischievous skullduggery' after all! Thanks again for a superb magazine – and just to get the story complete, the name of our band was The Young Ones... and I'm the short-arse in the middle!

Paul Serafini
via e-mail

G&B: Well, it seems as if we may have uncovered the original rock'n'roll swindle. At least history has proved that Vox amps sound great in their own right. I do still regret that I sold an old Vox, but hey, there you go... and we bet you don't still own that old Dominator, either! You don't say if you're still playing, but chances are good seeing that you're reading *Guitar & Bass* – so you'd better have some pickups for some added twang.

Seymour Duncan

This month's star letter wins a set of Seymour Duncan pickups. Contact Aria on ☎ 020 8572 0033

EAR TODAY

Ever wished you had a time machine, and wondered what you'd do with it? As well as going back and picking up a pile of cheap '60s Marshalls and fuzz pedals and maybe buying Microsoft shares, I'd go back and have a word with myself about getting earplugs.

I've been playing for over 20 years, and my ears now whine constantly, 24-7. No let up, ever. I've been wearing earplugs for the last couple of years, but the damage that been done so far won't ever go away. Earplugs can be as cheap (a pound or two for 10 disposable wax ones from Boots), or as dear (£165 for custom-fitted super-comfortable ones) as you like. My own recommendation would be the re-usable Etymotic ER20's – check for them on eBay, for about £7 per pair. As well as protecting my ears, I like the advantage of hearing my voice crystal clear inside my head, which helps with singing, and my playing has improved due to me no longer over-damping the strings as a reaction to the volume.

Back to that time machine: there's no such thing, of course (and there never will be, otherwise whoever invents it would have popped back and told us how to make one, so they would always have been in existence), so no grabbing those old bargains. However, if your ears don't ring yet, it isn't too late to heed the words of this wannabe time traveller. I can't have a word with myself, but I can have a word with you. Get some earplugs.

Tommie Paxton
Haddington

G&B: **I wonder just how many of our readers have hearing problems that they can directly attribute to playing too much loud rock and roll? If you have a cautionary tale, send it in. Let's scare those youngsters.**

FEEL THE FUR

Just thought we'd let you know that we have never seen Dave Mustaine and our cat Gerry in the same room at the same time. Gerry is currently working on a new Megadeth tribute band project. He wants to let you know that he sits on your magazine every month, and it's great.

Andy & Karen
via e-mail

PUMP UP THE VOLUME

I was reading your article on tremolo pedals in the April '07 issue of *Guitar & Bass* and thought I should write in to share an easy mod for the Boss TR-2 tremolo that fixes the volume drop that your reviewer wrote about. I own a TR-2, and was happy with the sound of it, but the slight volume drop was noticeable, especially for solo volumes. An easy way to stop this is to do the 'C4 mod': basically, this involves taking the pedal to pieces so you can get at the circuit board (being careful to remember where all the screws

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GUITAR GYM

STAY FIT AND PLAY BETTER: SHOULDER STRETCH!

Let's not forget about the upper back, the bit that seems destined to be crumpled forward for most of the time you're playing. This stretch is ideal for reversing that forward-slumped posture, and takes pressure off the spinal cord and its nerve roots while stretching the vertebral joints and shoulders. Start in a kneeling position and reach forward, letting the upper back and shoulders sag down towards the floor. Hold this position for one to two minutes, and try to find time to do it twice a day. You can modify this stretch by sitting back on your heels and reaching forward in the same manner into the 'child's pose'. Both of these are really relaxing stretches.

Got a health issue that affects your playing? Marion Turner is a physio specialising in musicians' injuries – write in and we'll get her on to it

came from, and where you've put them!) and removing the C4 capacitor – the big silver one in the middle of the board. It's labelled 'C4', which makes it even easier! Some people cut it out, but it's easy enough to remove cleanly if you're reasonably confident with a soldering iron. Then put the pedal back together, and *voila*, one TR-2 with no volume drop. I did this to mine about six months ago, and haven't had any problems – and I use it a lot. If you carry out this mod you will void any guarantee you might have, but in my experience Boss pedals very rarely go wrong anyway. Good luck, and happy modding!

Ben Smith
via e-mail

WRAP IT UP

I'm tempted to get either an Eastwood copy of a Les Paul Junior, or maybe one of the Vintage Zip guitars you mentioned last month. However, I'm a bit concerned about this wrap-around bridge business. How accurate is the intonation with such a device, and if the intonation is a bit wonky, is there any way of correcting it?

Andrew Hawkesworth
via e-mail

G&B: **It's best with bridges of this type to check before you buy. The Eastwood and Zip should be fine – but you could ask the shop to fit your fave strings before you slap money down. Wraparounds can often be set via two grub-screws behind the studs; you can set the top and bottom E, but middle strings can only be tweaked by changing gauge. The solution is a 'fixed compensated' or a truly intonatable wraparound bridge. We like the TonePros stuff; Wilkinson has a neat adjustable wrapover; also, check out pigtailmusic.com.**

STRAP IT ON

Did you know you can use those little rubber rings you get on Grolsch bottle tops as cheapo strap locks? Just slip one over the strap button after you've put the strap on.

Tim Marsden
Essex

G&B: **Nice one, Tim. More tips like this, please readers, and it could be your name right here.**

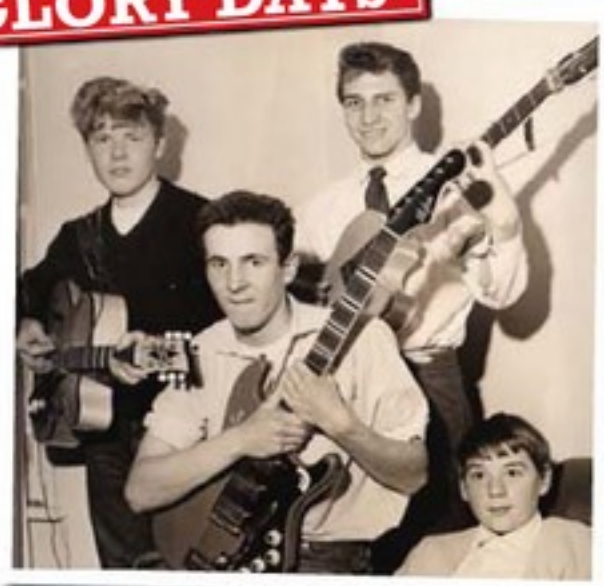
MORE RORY

Hi, I would just like to thank you for the transcription of *I Fall Apart* by Rory Gallagher. I've been a big Rory fan for many years and I was over the moon to find him in your mag.

Paul Woyen
via e-mail

G&B: **Good to know we hit the spot. If you missed our big Rory Gallagher special back in July 2005, you should give the back orders department a call – you'll love it. As we print loads of music we're always ready to take requests – so, readers, tell us what you'd like to learn.**

GLORY DAYS



VINTAGE '62

We were called The Cravats: on the left is Ray Hector, later called Jesse, frontman of Hammersmith Gorillas; Adrian Stamback, bassist of The Clique, who recorded on the Larry Page's Pye label; myself, holding onto my beloved Hofner V3; and, bottom right, a 14-year old Tim Harris, later the drummer with the Foundations. The rest of us were about 16. A long time ago, 1962!

Gerry Williams
Liverpool

Fame can still be yours! Send a photo (a digital one, not the original) of your old band and a few words to guitar@ipcmedia.com. Cool guitars and silly clothes please!

EDITOR'S LETTER

Do you have a problem turning your amp up loud enough at home? Now I know some people don't give a hoot about the neighbours, but I quite like mine, so I'm always a bit worried I might be disturbing the peace – and certainly there's no blazing into the early morning hours when you live in a block of flats. Now I know I could get a practice amp or a Pod to plug into, but that doesn't work well for playing with other people, jamming against studio tracks or using sounds you already like. The solution? Get yourself a couple of sets of good quality wireless headphones that receive on the same frequency and hook a base station up to your mixer's phones output. I then plug my pedals into the front of my old Ensonic DP4 processor. Wow – it's just like being on stage! Just try not to disturb the peace by yelling at your mate over the music; set up a room mic. And do watch your ears...

Marcus Leadley
EDITOR

www.guitarmagazine.co.uk

Stop Look & Listen

Albums Books DVDs

Black Leather Motorcycle Club

Baby 81

(Island/Drop The Gun)

From the bluesy intro riff of opening track *Took Out A Loan*, BLMC let you know just how much throttle they'll be giving their brand of psychedelic fuzz rock on *Baby 81*. Last album *Howl* was a laid-back, folky affair showing the three-piece was stretching out from the format that brought them chart success with songs like *Love Burns* and *What Ever Happened To My Rock And Roll*. There hooks mightn't be quite as strong on here, but the pace, depth and overall blend of the songs mark it out as their most accomplished collection yet. The epic *American X* clocks in at over nine minutes and is also notable for what the band describe as their 'first proper guitar solo', which comes as a shock from a band driven so completely by the instrument. The first of many, it is to be fondly hoped.

Dinosaur Jr

Beyond

(P.I.A.S)

The legendary line-up of Dinosaur Jr returns with a triumphant blast of sonic ear-bashing that rolls back the years. J Mascis, Lou Barlow and drummer Murph blended punk, '70s rock and Sonic Youth-style white noise to stun the rock world back in '88. Then they had a big fight and didn't speak to each other for years. Lou Barlow went off to have massive US chart success with Folk Implosion and Sebadoh; Mascis, who is credited with re-inventing the guitar solo for the indie generation, ploughed ahead with the band. Those Mascis chops are showcased here on the likes of *Pick Me Up*, but Barlow's tuneful sensibility reins in the excess to great effect. Listen to *This Is All I Came To Do* for a prime example of what this band can do when they refrain from punching each other.

Tom McRae

King Of Cards

(V2)

McRae set out to write a more upbeat and energetic album than his previous long players and has met with considerable success. His heartfelt strum-a-longs tread much the same ground as singer-songwriters of the Damien Rice school, with *Got A Suitcase Got Regrets* being a case in point. There's some subtle slide work on *Houdini And The Girl* on top of soothing arpeggios and an electric is given an airing on *Deliver Me,* but mostly we get dreamy acoustic chords backing up McRae's powerful falsetto. If previous outings have come from 'a pretty dark place', this time we're treated to a smooth, soaring ride.

The Mission

God Is A Bullet

(Cooking Vinyl)

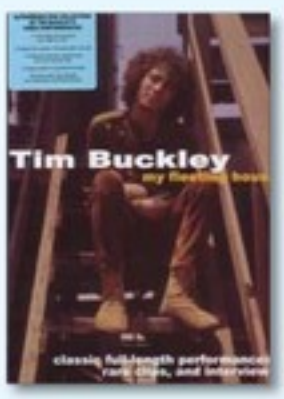
It's now 21 years since Wayne Hussey's pop goth outfit first darkened our doors, and this is the second effort from a brand new line-up. All the atmospheric trappings of the band's most successful *Carved In Sand* era are revisited, with original guitarist Simon Hinkler popping into the studio to help rekindle the chiming anthemic tones of yore. Hussey's lyrics are cringeworthy at times, most notably on *Blush* – he certainly should – and the terribly cheesy *Aquarius & Gemini*. But *Absolution* is an old school indie disco stomper and you're reminded, more than once, that this fella certainly knows his way around a melody.

DVDs

Tim Buckley

My Fleeting House

(Heads Up)



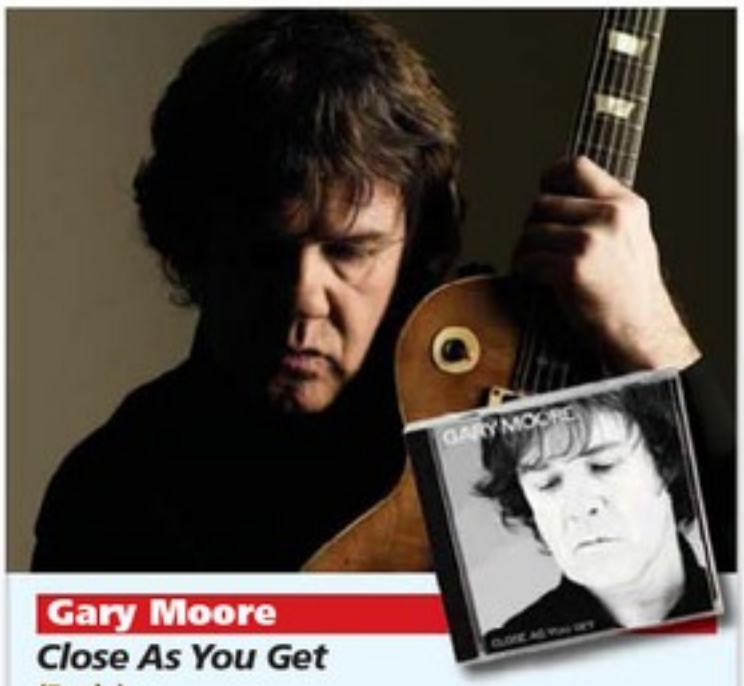
These performances from the late Tim Buckley were culled from various television programs recorded between 1967 and 1974. Linked by interviews with Buckley's songwriting partner Larry Beckett and guitar player Lee Underwood, the DVD plays like a musical guide to the man's tragically short life. To top it all off, you get fine versions of *Song For The Siren*, *No Man Can Find The War* and the only recorded version of *Boboquivari* to found anywhere on audio or video.

Frank Zappa

Classic Albums

(Pinnacle)

According to son Dweezil, *Over-nite Sensation* (1973) and *Apostrophe (')* (1974) 'is where you go to find every aspect of Frank's music squeezed into two perfectly formed records'. This documentary on the making of those records, which includes interviews with Frank's family, Warren Cucurullo and Steve Vai, gives you some great insights into the creative powers and working methods of the musical maverick. The analysis and musical demonstrations (featuring excerpts from Zappa tracks including *I'm The Slime* and *Cosmic Debris*) accompany rare archive and home movie footage that are worth the price of purchase alone.



Gary Moore

Close As You Get

(Eagle)

Following the same original tunes/covers format of last year's *Old New Ballads Blues* album, the former Thin Lizzy man confirms yet again his love and passion for the blues. You could go on for a long while praising his use of vibrato and sustain and his superlative soloing skills, but what's so impressive is Moore's feel for it all. When he tackles Chuck Berry's *Thirty Days* he attacks it with brutal abandon rather than going through the pub-combo motions, and even the sublime self-penned *Trouble At Home* avoids the silky sheen that bedevils many blues albums. In conclusion? Damn right he's still got the blues… and we should all be thankful.

Burn

Global Warning

(Formula One)

Although the Brit rockers released two highly-acclaimed albums in the mid-'90s, due to various misfortunes megastardom never managed to make friends with Burn. After a hiatus of several years and changes in the original personnel (including lead guitarist Julian Nicholas and ex-Alien rhythm fretmaster Phil Hammond replacing original six-stringer Rab Devenney) the band return to the fray. There's nothing particularly cutting edge about *Global Warning*. Rubbish title aside, though, Burn's latest effort is refreshingly unapologetic about embracing such traditional classic rock values such as punch-the-air melodrama, not to mention a fine marriage of hard, galloping riffs and sweet melodic solos.

Funeral For A Friend

Tales Don't Tell Themselves

(Atlantic)

The Welsh quintet's blend of post-hardcore, metal and emo have won over a generation of youngsters (check your local rehearsal rooms), and their latest is a corker. For once, a rock band's notion of 'album as soundtrack' doesn't equal pretentious twaddle. Instead, FFAF guitarmongers Coombs-Roberts and Smith match the silver screen ambitions with powerhouse riffs and soaring leadlines.

Manic Street Preachers

Send Away The Tigers

(Columbia)

Mixing punk attitude, waspish lyrics and stadium rock guitars, the Manics return with their best record since *Everything Must Go*. When Bradfield cuts loose on the title track and *I'm Just A Patsy* the Welsh trio truly are a joy to behold.

Snap Judgements

Vatican DC

Make It Ride

(The Red Flag Recording Co.)

Rhythmic, punky workouts enhanced by pumping basslines and cutting guitar parts supplied by ex-Menswear guitarist Chris Gentry. It's an exhilarating sprint from start to finish.

Fountains Of Wayne

Traffic And Weather

(Virgin)

Witty narratives from the warped minds of these arch commentators on modern American life, tied together with an engaging mish-mash of musical styles from steel twang to backwards guitar.

Fireworks Night

As Fools We Are

(Kartel)

If you like your music quirky and acoustic then you're in for a treat with this combo's second album; it ranges from sparse, haunting melodies to theremin-ukulele-glockenspiel full-on madness.

Zen Motel

Stations Of The Dead

(Imprint)

Trackside Pussy, 21st Century Bitch… if you guessed Zen Motel aren't a ballad kind of band, you'd be right. But being full of righteous rock'n'roll piss'n'vinegar more than compensates.

John Van Der Veer

The Ark

(Naim)

The Dutch virtuoso, aided by fleet-fingered mates Marcel Fisser and Pablo Minoli, embarks on a acoustic guitar odyssey that uses flamenco, classical and western for the forces of good.

Colin Hay

Are You Lookin' At Me?

(Compass)

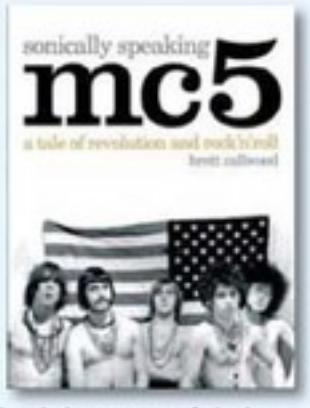
The latest from the former Men At Work frontman contains insightful meditations on life, love and sobriety set to evocative melodious (and often quite cheeky) musical backdrops.

BOOKS

MC5: Sonically Speaking – Tales of Revolution and Rock'n'Roll

Brett Callwood

(IMP)

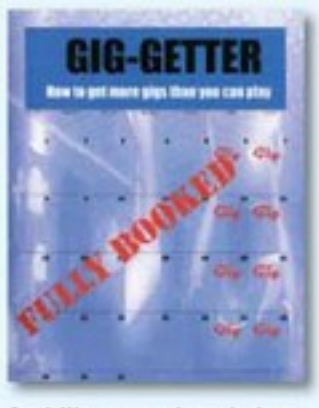


There are few bands that can claim to have been as influential as the MC5, and Brett Callwood's in-depth biography does a grand job of analysing and explaining the band's historical importance, both in terms of their music and their place in the rock'n'roll firmament. Everything from beginnings through to their all-too-brief heyday and post-MC5 projects gets covered, bolstered by interviews from the surviving members and all the important scenesters at the time. If the three albums they made from 1969 and 1971 are essential listening (and they most certainly are), then Callwood's tome is an ideal companion piece for learning how Kramer *et al* kicked out the jams.

Gig-Getter: How To Get More Gigs Than You Can Play

Gareth Bird

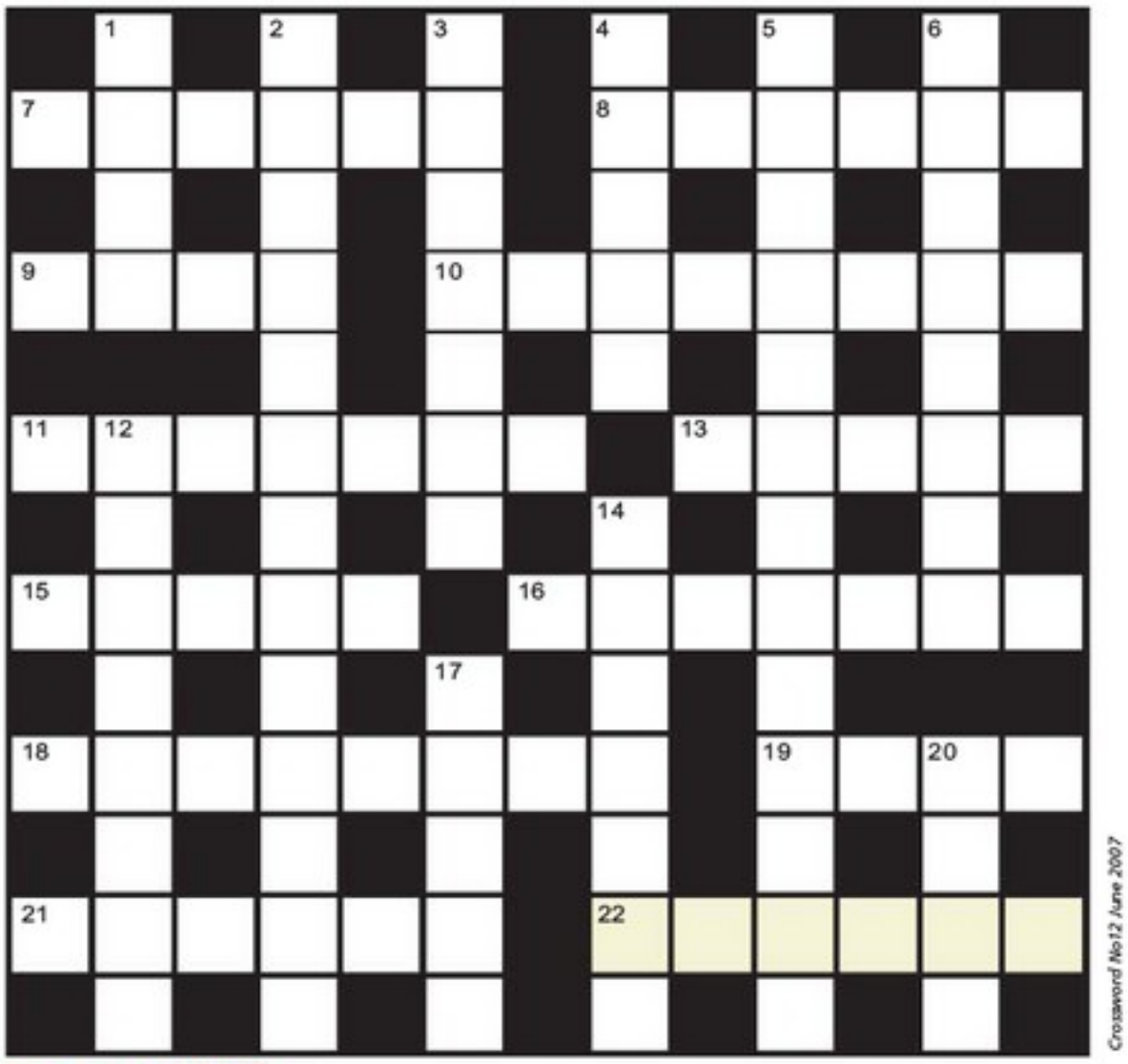
(GBA)



The nice, self-explanatory title sets the tone for Bird's straightforward guide to gig-hunting. Full of useful tips on how to organise and sell your band to promoters and press, once read you'll feel like you already knew it all – but have to admit deep down you don't practise. So consider it a wake-up call, lazy bones!

Win!

Send your completed crossword to the address opposite and name your preferred electric string gauge. First correct entry drawn wins two sets of Vinci strings! Closing date: 1st July



ACROSS

7. Flamenco remix loses me for Gretsch (6)
8. Take them away to get everyone on their feet! (6)
9. Talking head from Latin America (4)
10. In confusion deliver nothing for bad man (4-4)
11. From Bon Jovi or Deep Purple (7)
13. Electronic instrument is alternate classy icon (5)
15. Initially found relishing in progressive performances he is now also known for Toyah being his 16 (5)
16. Her indoors – much amused according to Neil Young (3,4)
18. Secretly start strong and end healthy (8)
19. String found in light opera (3,1)
21. Steady flow messed up master (6)
22. The future's bright for amplification? (6)

DOWN

1. Main bassist (4)
2. Pick protectors from chart pals etcs (13)
3. Sweet like a financial backer (7)
4. The mac Peter left behind in Fleetwood (5)
5. Drat liars that mix-up armless Fender (8,5)
6. Chicken is on the house with the song you want to hear (4,4)
12. I get rattier when you do this (8)
14. First man to play bass for Boy etc (7)
17. Edinburgh politician has to control box (5)
20. Afterthought contains example of string holders (4)

Answers No11 May 2007

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Guitar & Bass

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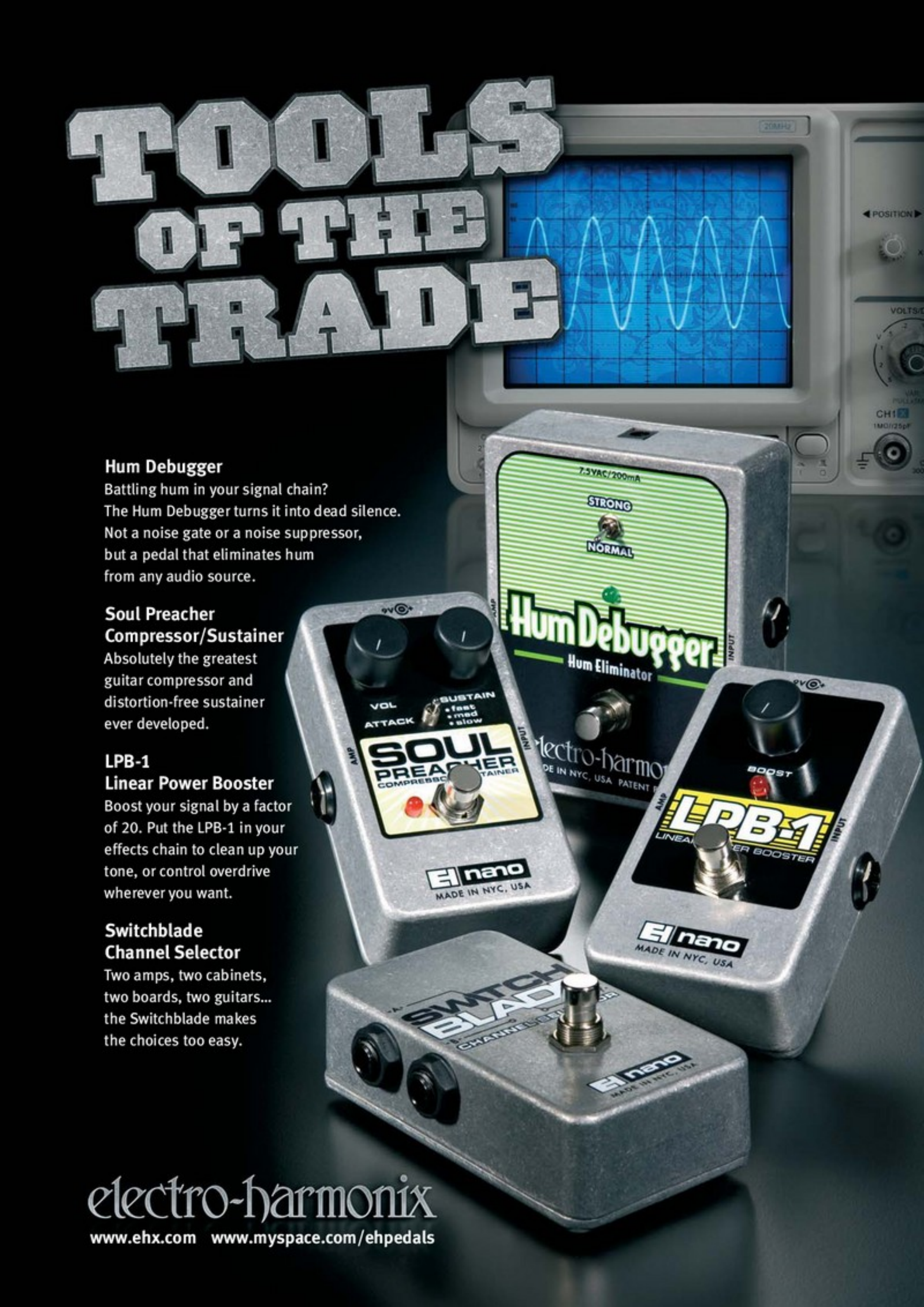

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25 years ago, Fender first dug deep to try to recreate the vibe of the legendary original Telecaster. Tony Bacon tells the story of the reissue program – a radical change of heart which turned the company's fortunes and also produced some great guitars

SOUL MINING

Hop into a time machine and whizz back to the mid-'60s, and you might be surprised to find no vintage electric guitars. None at all. What you would have found were simply old, secondhand ones. How, then, have we arrived at where we are today, where 'vintage' mythology drives the specifications of the majority of *new* guitars on the market? And how does this apply to what has to be one of the simplest, most basic guitars ever designed, and certainly one of the best-sounding – the Fender Telecaster?

It was during the 1970s that some guitarists became convinced that older electric instruments were somehow more playable and sounded better than new guitars. One of the dealers keen to service the lucrative vintage requirements of well-heeled rock players boasted in 1976: 'You simply cannot compare what I have to offer with what the big companies are mass producing today.'

At the same time, Stephen Stills had amassed a collection of about 70 'old' guitars. The ex-Crosby Stills & Nash guitarist, touring with his solo band, needed two dressing rooms: one for himself; another for the 17 vintage guitars that accompanied him on the road. 'I don't think they've built anything new that's worth a damn since 1965,' said Stills. 'It's all mechanised.' With that comment he neatly summed up the idea that it was somehow only old guitars that were worthy of attention by 'real' players.

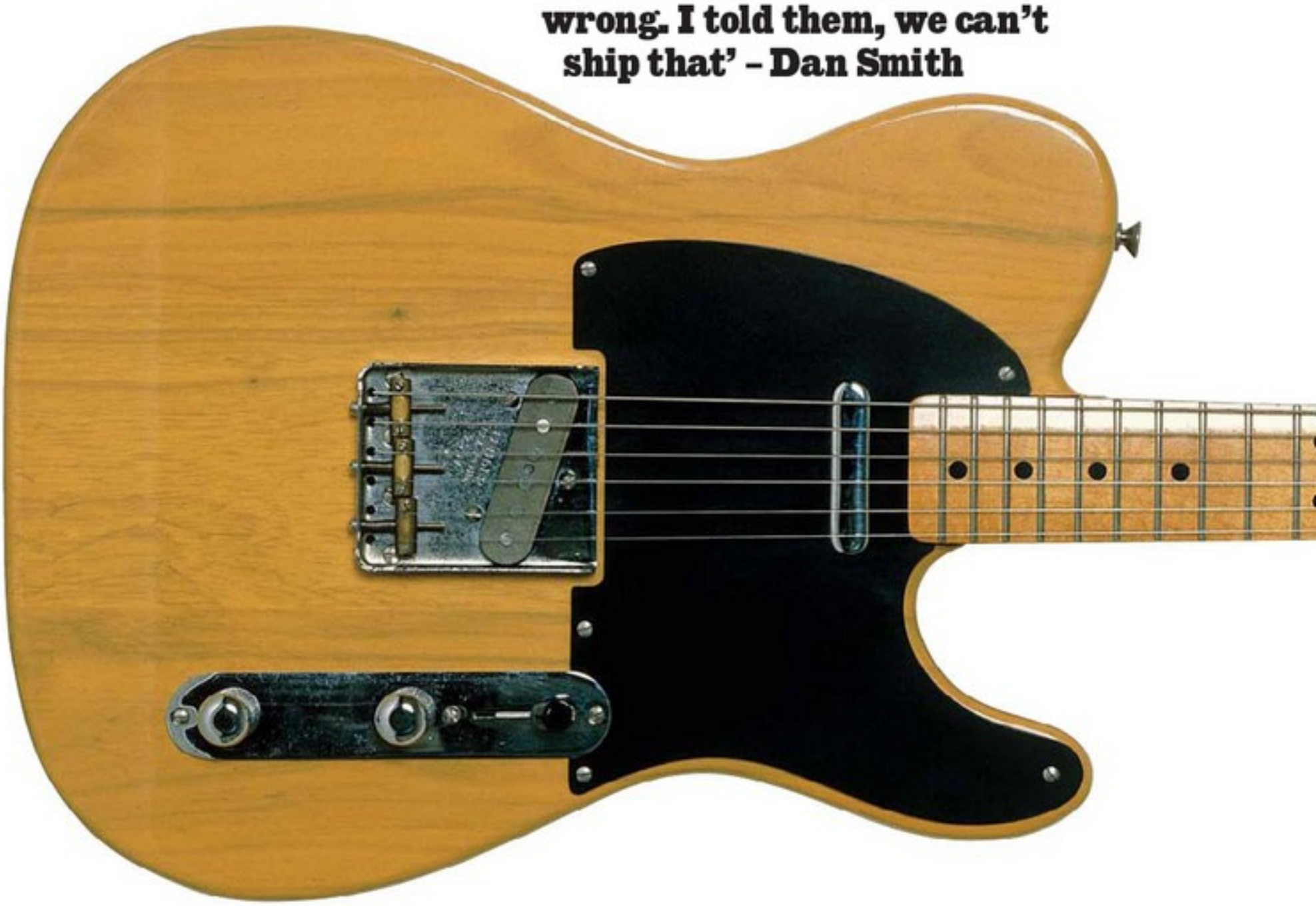
These old guitars came from the hallowed early days of the electric guitar, when Fender revolutionised the industry with the original pre-production Esquire in 1950, then the Broadcaster the same year, and the transitional 'Nocaster' and renamed Telecaster in 1951. The solidbody electric guitar had been born. Music would never be the same again.

All of this was in Fender's mind when CBS brought in a new management team in 1981 to see what could be done to improve the company's flagging reputation and fortunes. They took account of this growing interest in old guitars. A daringly simple plan was formed: Fender would copy itself. They would recreate the guitars that players and collectors were spending large sums of money to acquire: the 'vintage' Fender guitars made back in the company's glory years in the 1950s and 1960s.

Freddie Tavares had worked for Fender since 1953, mainly helping to devise new products and, as a musician himself, liaising with players to find out what they needed. Leo Fender himself had been given the elbow from the company he had started, soon after CBS took over in 1965. Freddie was still a consultant to Fender R&D in 1980, and he began work around that time on a Vintage Telecaster reissue, planned as a re-creation of a 1952 model. It would be the first modern reissue of a vintage-style Fender guitar.

At the July NAMM show in 1981, Fender showed a prototype. Dan Smith arrived at the company a month later, as director of marketing for electric guitars. 'This supposed '52 Telecaster had a

'The supposed '52 Telecaster had a whole bunch of stuff wrong. I told them, we can't ship that' – Dan Smith



polyester finish, the wrong body shape, a whole bunch of stuff wrong,' he recalls. 'I told them, we can't ship that. So we shut down the vintage reissue series. We brought in Ted Greene, a great player here in California, who had 13 or 14 old Broadcasters and Nocasters and Telecasters. We spent a lot of time with him, making sure we had all the details right.'

What happened next in the quest for accuracy in this first programme of Fender Vintage reissues is a bit of a shocker. Fender R&D man John Page travelled with Smith to vintage guitar dealer Ax In Hand in Illinois where they took more measurements and photographs and paint-tests from relevant old Fenders. No surprise there, then. But they also bought themselves some vintage Fender guitars. 'That's right,' laughs Smith, 'we went out and bought back our own product!'

This purchase of their own history resulted in Fender's first Vintage reissue series, which began to appear in 1982. The guitars were the revised '52 Telecaster, plus a maple-neck '57 and rosewood-board '62 Strat. Production of the Vintage reissues was planned to start in 1982 at Fender US (their factory in Fullerton, California) and at Fender Japan (the Fujigen factory based in Matsumoto, 130 miles north-west of Tokyo). But changes underway at the American factory meant that the US versions did not come on-stream until early 1983, and the factory there was not up to full speed until the start of '84.

The July 1983 pricelist pitched the '52 Telecaster reissue at $895, which was $445 more than the regular Tele of the time. To put that in perspective, that same month, Guitar Trader – a dealer based in New Jersey

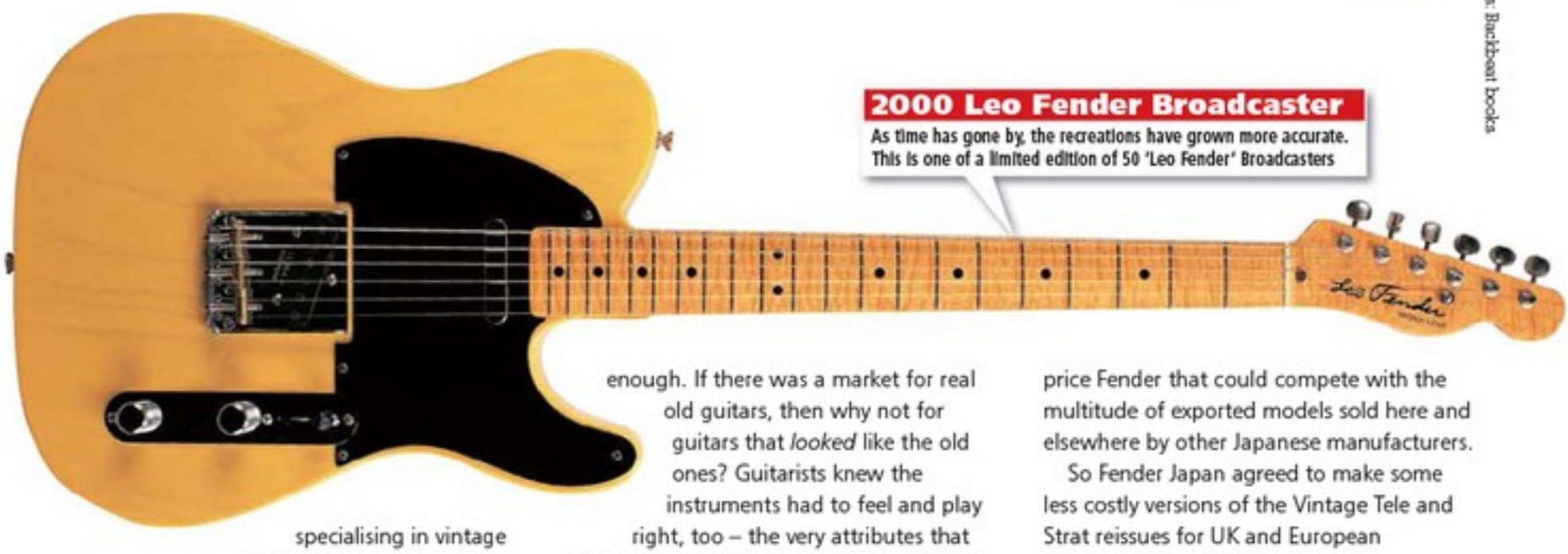
'The guys almost cried, because the Japanese product was so good. It was what we were having a hell of a time trying to do'

1984 JV Series '52 Telecaster

The first officially-licensed Japanese Vintage guitars put the USA company's first reissue efforts to shame. And they were cheap!

1984 Fender '52 Telecaster

Fender USA re-jigged and produced a decent reissue, but the body radius, neck dots, frets and neck shape were improved further in 1998



2000 Leo Fender Broadcaster

As time has gone by, the recreations have grown more accurate. This is one of a limited edition of 50 'Leo Fender' Broadcasters

Photos: JV Tele: Mark Fletcher collection. Others: Backbeat books

specialising in vintage instruments – offered a genuine 1954 Telecaster for sale at $3000. It was the most expensive guitar in their entire inventory except for a handful of 1950s Les Paul Standards and a Gibson Flying V. This Tele was blond with a maple neck, a black pickguard, and a level-polepiece lead pickup. Guitar Trader noted it as 'fully intact and supplied with original formfit hardcase' and 'the most sought-after style of Telecaster produced'.

Fender's Vintage Tele reproduction was not exact enough for some diehard collectors, but the idea seemed sound enough. If there was a market for real old guitars, then why not for guitars that *looked* like the old ones? Guitarists knew the instruments had to feel and play right, too – the very attributes that made the older Teles so appealing. Clearly, Fender had more work to do. But it was definitely onto something.

Dan Smith and his colleagues at Fender US received samples of the Japanese-made Vintage reissues before US production started, and he remembers their reaction to the high quality of these oriental Fender re-creations. 'Everybody came up to inspect them and the guys almost cried, because the Japanese product was so good,' he admits. 'It was what we were having a hell of a time trying to do.' Fender Japan's guitars at this stage were being made only for the internal Japanese market, but Arbiter, Fender's European agent at the time, was putting pressure on the US management for a budget-price Fender that could compete with the multitude of exported models sold here and elsewhere by other Japanese manufacturers.

So Fender Japan agreed to make some less costly versions of the Vintage Tele and Strat reissues for UK and European distribution in 1982. These were distinguished at first by the addition of a small "Squier Series" logo on the tip of the headstock. This was soon changed, with a large "Squier" replacing the Fender logo. The Squier brand was born. 'It taught us, contrary to what the guys believed at Fender six or seven years before, that people would buy Fender guitars with "made in Japan" on them,' says Smith. 'In fact I really believe that our introduction of those instruments, worldwide and in the US, was what legitimised buying Japanese guitars.'

Certainly there'd been a resistance by many players to the cheap image associated with Japanese-made guitars, but the rise in quality of brands such as Ibanez, Yamaha, Fernandes, Aria, Tokai – and then Squier

'68 Thinline Reissue

Widely derided through the '70s-'80s, the original single-coil Thinline somehow became cool again – and these Mexican reissues followed

'62 Custom Tele
The bound-body, rosewood-fingerboard '62 Custom Telecaster has become popular with reissues from Japan and the USA

and Fender – wiped away much of this prejudice and gave oriental guitars a new popularity and respectability.

CBS decided during 1984 that it had finally had enough of the music business and wanted to sell Fender Musical Instruments. Offers were invited and by the end of January 1985, almost exactly 20 years since the company had acquired it, CBS confirmed it would sell Fender to 'an investor group led by William Schultz, president of Fender Musical Instruments'. The contract was formalised in February and the sale completed in March for $12.5 million.

2001 Relic Nocaster
From June '95 until June '99 Fender outsourced its 'relic' paint and wear work to Vince Cunetto. After 1999, they brought the entire process back in-house

Following the success of the Vintage reissue series, Fender Japan marketed more models that re-created many of the guitars from Fender's past, including reproductions of the Paisley, Blue Flower, Rosewood, and Thinline Telecasters, as well as some models fitted with humbuckers.

Since then, the Japanese have continued to make an impressive line of good Fender guitars for the home market, some of which have from time to time been sold here and in the US. Meanwhile in the West, Fender established their new US factory in 1985 in Corona, California, and two years later a further new plant in Ensenada, Mexico. Vintage-style Teles have poured forth, today grouped primarily into the US-made American Vintage and modified Vintage Hot Rod series, and the Mexican Classic series.

At this point, Keith Richards pops into the picture. A common request from some artists was for Fender's Custom Shop to make them a replica of a favourite old guitar, usually because the original was too valuable to risk taking out on the road. The story goes, according to a Fender insider, that Richards told the Shop that some replicas they'd made for him for a Stones tour looked too new. He said if they 'bashed them up a bit' then he'd play them. So the Shop began to include wear-and-tear distress marks to replicate the overall look of a battered old original. It was not a new idea, but it was certainly an effective one.

'The Relics started almost as a tongue-in-cheek thing. It was like worn-in Levis, or something' – John Page

Then JW Black, the Fender Shop's Master Builder who had been working with the Stones, came up with the idea of offering these aged replicas as regular Custom Shop catalogued items, called Relics. 'It started almost as a tongue-in-cheek thing,' admits John Page, who ran the Custom Shop for many years from its inception in 1987. 'It was like worn-in Levis or something. It would look cool, and in the first three rows it'd look like you're playing an incredibly valuable Nocaster. But only you know that it's not really. That was how it started.'

The Shop made two aged 1950s-like samples: a Nocaster (the transitional Broadcaster/Telecaster) and a 'Mary Kaye' Stratocaster (blond body, gold-plated parts). 'We took them to the January 1995 NAMM trade show,' recalls Page, 'and put them under glass cases like they were pieces of art. Everyone came along and would say oh, that's really cool, you brought original ones as a tribute. And we were saying, er, yeah... how many do you want? People went nuts! It was amazing.' Soon the Custom Shop was responding to the unexpected demand, offering a Relic Nocaster and three Relic Strats.

The line was expanded in 1998 by offering three strands of these 're-creations' in what Fender now call the Time Machine series. There's the original Relic style, given plenty of Keith's aged-like knocks and the look of heavy wear, as if the guitar has been out on the road for a generation or so; the Closet Classic, made to look as if it had been bought new way back when, played a few times, and then stuck in a cupboard; and N.O.S. (for 'New Old Stock'), as if an instrument had been bought brand new in the 1950s or 1960s and then put straight into a time machine that transported it to the present day – the kind of guitars that collectors and dealers regularly dream about, but rarely find in real life.

Today, the Custom Shop's Time Machine series includes a '59 Esquire, a '51 Nocaster, and a '63 and '67 Telecaster, all available in three levels of aging and listing around £2,500. This may seem high, but when you compare what you might have to pay now for clean originals – from perhaps £3,500 or so for a '67 Tele to £50,000 or more for a Nocaster – then the attraction of a pre-aged, fine-playing guitar becomes a lot clearer.

And even if you could find originals at those prices, there's >

Paisley Telecaster
In 1985 Fender made a Paisley Red reissue that went down a storm, though they failed to get the colour right. This 'Crafted In Japan' model is from 2002

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B.C. Rich

'Leo believed he was put here to make the very best instruments in the world' – Phyllis Fender

always the worry with a vintage piece about how 'right' this paint finish is or that pickguard screw or those solder joints. The Time Machines at least take away any niggling doubts about originality. The Custom Shop specials appeal to those of us keen to acquire a new Fender with the feel of an oldie, and in the case of the Relics made to look as if decades of wear-and-tear have stained the fingerboard, scuffed the body, and tarnished the hardware. The Time Machine series looks like a brilliant move, the nearest Fender has come with new instruments to the almost indefinable appeal of vintage guitars – something many of us thought was firmly locked away in the past.

Leo Fender would surely have loved all these developments to his 'standard guitar', created back in the 1950s. He was honoured at a Rock & Roll Hall Of Fame ceremony in 1992, where Leo was one of 12 music legends inducted into the Hall that January, alongside music greats like Jimi Hendrix, Johnny Cash, and others. Leo's second wife Phyllis was there for Leo, who died the previous year. She says: 'When I accepted his award I said that Leo truly believed that musicians were special angels, special envoys from the Lord. He believed he was put here to make the very best instruments in the world, because these special angels would help us get through this life, would ease our pain and ease our sadness, and help us celebrate.'

Keith Richards spoke on behalf of Leo at the Hall Of Fame, rather more prosaically. 'He gave us the weapons,' he said, leaving the crowd with what he called the guitar player's prayer: 'Caress it. Don't squeeze it.'

Tony Bacon's latest book is *Six Decades Of The Fender Telecaster* (Backbeat)

Supercharged Telecasters

The current fashion for humbucker'd Teles has reached such a pitch that it's been the trigger here for the latest round of Fender reissues. In the 1970s, players were aware that part of Fender's distinction came from bright-sounding single-coil pickups; warmer, fatter-sounding humbuckers were seen then as Gibson territory. But there was this nagging doubt about the Tele's neck pickup – the weakest part of an otherwise magical mix. Some guitarists simply didn't use it. Others took the matter into their own hands, or at least passed the problem to their repairman.

A popular choice was to replace the Tele's mellow neck pickup with a ballsier humbucker, often lifted from a Gibson. Keith Richards' famous blackguard 1950s Tele, nicknamed Micawber, had a dropped-in Gibson humbucker; Steely Dan's Denny Dias replaced both pickups of his Telecaster with humbuckers; in 1973, Jeff Beck got a custom Tele with two Gibson humbuckers that pickup maestro Seymour Duncan had put together, nicknamed the 'Tele-Gib'; Andy Summers used a Telecaster Custom with a Gibson 'bucker at the neck.

Fender reacted, and the existing Telecaster Thinline was modified in 1971 with two new Fender humbuckers. The press release said: 'The humbucking pickups not only help eliminate feedback, they also add a gutty mid-range and bass sound.' It was about as close as they ever came publicly to saying: 'This Fender is like a Gibson.' More official Teles-with-humbuckers followed: the 1972 Telecaster Custom kept the classic Tele lead pickup with just that naughty neck pickup changed to a humbucker. But they were back to twin humbuckers for the Telecaster Deluxe of 1973, which added a big-headstock neck from the Stratocaster and Gibson-style pickups and control layout. None of these hot-rods were very successful at the time, and many customers steered clear. The Deluxe and Custom disappeared by 1981, the Thinline two years earlier.

Fender had gone to the source for their own humbuckers. They enticed Seth Lover to California in 1967, away from the Gibson company in Michigan where he had famously invented Gibson's humbucking pickup in the 1950s. Lover said his new employers wanted 'a copy of a Gibson humbucking pickup, wanted it to sound exactly like that. The patent had not quite run out, so I designed them a pickup that looked a little different. Also, I used cunife magnets [an alloy of copper-nickel-iron], not Gibson's alnico [aluminium-nickel-cobalt]. I hesitated in making it sound exactly like the Gibson – I figured Fender was known for a brilliant type sound, so I kept a little more brilliance in the Fender pickup than there was in the Gibson'. Lover staggered the polepieces, with the three bass ones to the front of the cover and the three treble ones to the rear.

And so full circle back to today's fad for humbucker'd Teles. Thom Yorke has been seen regularly with a '70s two-humbucker Tele Deluxe, and Radiohead's popularity did the idea of the humbucker'd Tele a power of good. Along came Coldplay (who used a Thinline), The Hives (a Custom), Snow Patrol (a Deluxe and a Custom), Gomez (a Thinline), Maroon 5 (a Deluxe), Franz Ferdinand (a Deluxe) and others, all queuing up to play the fatter-sounding Teles.

Fender reacted to the popularity – does this sound familiar? – and reissued the 1970s humbucker'd Teles here as part of the Mexican-made Classic series: the '72 Telecaster Custom (neck humbucker, bridge single-coil, four controls) and '72 Telecaster Thinline (f-hole, two humbuckers) in 1999, plus the '72 Telecaster Deluxe (two humbuckers, Strat-like headstock) in 2004.

Contemporary Tele
Launched in 1994, the Mexican-made Contemporary Telecaster offered Keef-like riff power with a Gibson-style 'bucker at the neck aping the old 'customised' look

'72 Deluxe reissue
30 years on, the Deluxe with its sharp yet meaty Seth Lover humbuckers has become an indie rock staple, thanks to excellent reissues like this 2005 model

Photos: Deluxe reissue, Backbeat books

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EVERYBODY SCREAM

There's a Telecaster variation to suit all musical tastes and all depths of pockets. Huw Price selects half-a-dozen of the best

There's a popular notion that the Telecaster has remained unchanged since its inception. Not so: with an inveterate tinkerer like Leo, nothing ever stayed the same.

Some early Teles had pine bodies, but they soon changed to light ash. In the late '50s alder became the body wood for all colours except sunburst and blonde. Maple necks were fitted with rosewood fingerboards – first slabs, then veneers. Changes were made to the electronics: early bridge pickups had Alnico III slugs, but Alnico V became standard around 1955. The number of turns of magnet wire always seemed to vary wildly. The flat polepieces became staggered and eventually machine-wound plain enamel magnet wire replaced the hand-wound formvar wire.

The controls evolved too. Originally, the second knob was a pickup 'blender' control when the switch was in the bridge position; the middle position gave the neck pickup, the middle setting gave the neck pickup with a preset treble roll-off. The blender became a regular tone control but that muddy neck option remained, and you could only get the two pickups working together if you jammed the switch in between the bridge and middle settings. Some put the change to the modern layout as late as 1967.

Then in the CBS era the finish changed from nitrocellulose to polyester, neck joints went from four bolts to three with a Micro-Tilt, and the body weight on some '70s examples approached 3.5 metric tonnes. It's bewildering when you consider that all these changes only apply to the regular Telecaster model. So far we haven't even mentioned the early Custom Tele models with white or black body binding, the later unbound Tele Customs with neck humbuckers, that double 'buckered Deluxe or the two semi-hollow Thinline models!

These days, if we're talking Telecaster reissues, it's a case of 'which model do you want?' and 'how much do you want to pay?' You can get near detail-perfect reissues of all the classic pre-CBS and post-CBS Teles with vintage-inspired neck profile, plus there are models with modern features like flatter fingerboards, fatter frets and the option of hotter pickups. It seems that Fender has a reissue to suit every taste and pocket, and there are even some new mutations in the Tele gene pool. Let's twang!

Squier Telecaster Custom P90

Price: £209

This model closely resembles a 1970s Telecaster Deluxe, but the awkward Strat-shaped headstock has been ditched for a regular Telecaster shape and a pair of P90s has replaced the two offset-polepiece Lover-designed humbuckers. Other Deluxe features include a hardtail bridge – placed slightly crooked, we notice – with through-body string attachment and individual volumes and tones for each pickup. The body is agathis, a conifer that's sometimes called 'the poor man's mahogany'. The one-piece maple neck's matt finish is so thin it almost feels like you're playing bare wood. It's a fine handling medium-depth C-shaped profile with a fairly flat fingerboard radius and very well installed medium frets. You get a set of quality sealed tuners, too.

SOUNDS

The Custom P90's acoustic tone is mellow rather than Telecasterishly snappy, but there's plenty of resonance. The pickups are dark and gnarly with two distinct tones: the bridge has an appealing nasal bark, while the neck is pure and sweet. Together you get a cool phasey chime, and there's plenty of output to drive an amp. The clean tones are certainly impressive – but this guitar also just loves distortion. Whether you want a valvey blues overdrive or pedal to the metal, it really delivers.

VERDICT

My mate has owned one of these for over a year and he's delighted with it (except for the jack socket falling out). This guitar plays as well as any in this group and it sounds superb, covering a whole range of dirty and clean tones. It's no trad Tele, but it's still a fine guitar regardless of the price.

FACTFILE

Description: Solid body electric guitar. Made in Indonesia

Price: £209.99

Build: Agathis body with bolt-on maple neck, 22-fret fingerboard, stop-tail bridge, sealed tuners

Electrics: Three-way switch, individual volume and tone controls

FINAL SCORE

Build Quality	14/20
Playability	18/20
Sound	15/20
Value for money	18/20
Vibe	15/20
TOTAL	**80%**

Good for... retro and modern clean and dirty plus bottleneck sounds

Look elsewhere... traditional Telecaster tones

Fender Classic Series '60s Telecaster

Price: £499

Train-spotters can pick over the minute details, but this is a tidy take on an early 1960s Tele. The neck lacquer is shaded a lovely amber and the Indian rosewood fingerboard sports clay-style dots. You get a green-tinted scratchplate, the correct flat top knobs, proper '60s-style steel saddles, vintage-type tuners and a three-way 'top hat' switch – thankfully without the 'muddy' option. Best of all the body is 1960s spec alder, but the finish is polyester, not nitrocellulose. The body is fairly heavy by authentic 1960s standards but the acoustic tone actually sounds like a Tele even before you plug it in. There's little info available on the 'Alnico pickups' but they have plastic rather than vulcanised fibreboard bobbins, and the bridge unit is wrapped with tape instead of with old-fashioned string.

SOUNDS

This guitar's sound is unmistakably 'Telecaster', but not necessarily a *great* Telecaster. It plays nicely with its early 1960s neck profile and skinny frets, but the top end of the bridge pickup is a bit edgy and the muted neck tone might confirm some people's prejudices. I alleviated the neck setting problems by moving the unit closer to the strings, but if you already own one of these or you're thinking of buying one and changing pickups, I'd suggest swapping those steel saddles for compensated brass saddles first.

VERDICT

This guitar does look and feel like a definite step-up in quality from the Tele Custom P90. Considering that these guitars are built to a price, it's hard to see how they could do it better – until you check out the guitar we've got for review over the page.

FACTFILE

Description: Solid body electric guitar. Made in Mexico

Price: £499

Build: Alder body with bolt-on maple neck, 21-fret rosewood fingerboard, three steel-saddle bridge, vintage tuners

Electrics: Three-way switch, single volume and tone

FINAL SCORE

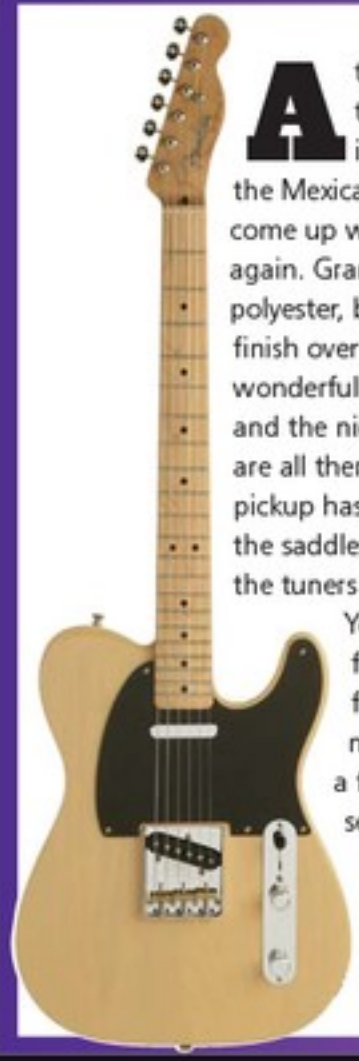
Build Quality	16/20
Playability	17/20
Sound	13/20
Value for money	15/20
Vibe	14/20
TOTAL	**75%**

Good for... Steve Cropper chops, rock and indie

Look elsewhere... purist country, 1950s sounds, tonal refinement

Fender Classic Player Baja

Price: £499



At 4kg or 8.8lbs this '50s reissue is a bit porky, but the Mexican factory has come up with the goods again. Granted, the finish is polyester, but the blonde finish over the ash body is wonderfully translucent and the nice vintage details are all there. The bridge pickup has flat polepieces, the saddles are brass and the tuners are old-school. You also get a flatter-radius fingerboard with nice fat frets and a four-way pickup selector with a clever S1 switch concealed in the top of the volume control.

SOUNDS

With S1 in the 'up' position, positions 1 to 3 are bridge, both (in parallel) and neck, with position 4 combining both coils in series for a fat humbucker tone. With the S1 'down', positions 1 and 3 are the same, but the coils in parallel and series mode are combined out of phase. The out-of-phase series mode is particularly great because it produced a subtle 'auto wah' effect – I kid you not! In phase it's not quite a humbucker tone, but it's close. So you can have fun leaving the S1 switched up and flick from a glassy neck rhythm tone straight to a fat rock tone for power chords and solos. This guitar's controls unlock all the sonic potential of a stock Telecaster.

VERDICT

The Classic Player Baja comes in at the same price as the Mexican 1960s reissue, but you get a whole lot more – and the great thing about the S1 switching, sounds aside, is that no-one need know it's there. Watch out for the weight, but vintage good looks, modern playability, superior pickups and six distinct and useable tone options add up to a great value package.

FACTFILE

Description: Solidbody electric guitar. Made in Mexico

Price: £499.99

Build: Ash body with bolt-on maple neck, 24-fret rosewood fingerboard, three brass-saddle bridge, vintage tuners

Electrics: S1 switch, four-way pickup switch, single volume and tone

FINAL SCORE

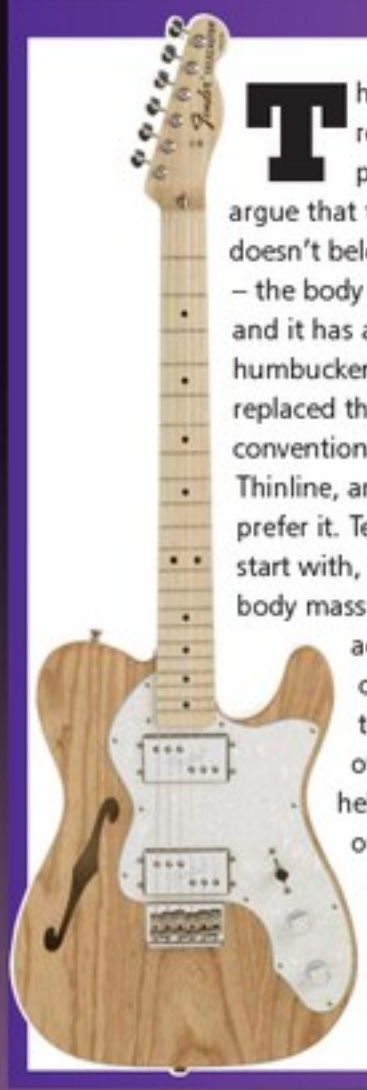
Build Quality	18/20
Playability	18/20
Sound	16/20
Value for money	17/20
Vibe	17/20
TOTAL	**86%**

Good for... trad Tele tones, rock and funk

Look elsewhere... for metal

Fender '72 Telecaster Thinline

Price: £749



There are two reasons why Tele purists might argue that this guitar doesn't belong in this group – the body is semi-hollow, and it has a pair of humbuckers. This model replaced the first, conventional-pickup Tele Thinline, and many people prefer it. Teles are toppy to start with, and removing body mass simply accentuates this characteristic. So the fatter sound of humbuckers helps to even things out, and you don't get the back-breaking weight of many 1970s ash-bodied Fenders.

Enough time has elapsed for some of those 1970s features to look very cool. Fender hasn't shied away from the bullet truss rod, a three-bolt Micro-Tilt neck joint or the period 'F'-branded tuners. Naturally, the finish is poly; these guitars always were.

SOUNDS

With six individual bridge saddles the intonation is accurate, and the medium neck is very playable. Predictably the acoustic tone is loud but it has plenty of meaty midrange and resonance. The semi-solid tone is most noticeable on the neck pickup, especially when you roll off a little treble. It's no mini jazzbox, but you do get a slight hint of ES-335. The bridge is gutsy and fat but there's enough twang and quack to remind you it's a Fender, and both pickups sound fantastic clean and distorted with superb touch-dynamics and clarity.

VERDICT

Maybe Fender was trying to make a guitar that sounded more like a Gibson – but it ended up closer to a small body Gretsch. It's got a great combination of sparkle and meat, so no wonder these unique and versatile guitars are so belatedly popular.

FACTFILE

Description: Semi-solid body electric guitar. Made in Mexico

Price: £749

Build: Ash body with bolt-on 21-fret maple neck, hardtail six-saddle bridge, F-brand tuners

Electrics: Two Seth Lover-designed humbucking pickups, three-way switch, master volume and tone

FINAL SCORE

Build Quality	17/20
Playability	18/20
Sound	16/20
Value for money	15/20
Vibe	16/20
TOTAL	**82%**

Good for... blues, indie, slide, roots rock

Look elsewhere... trad Tele tones

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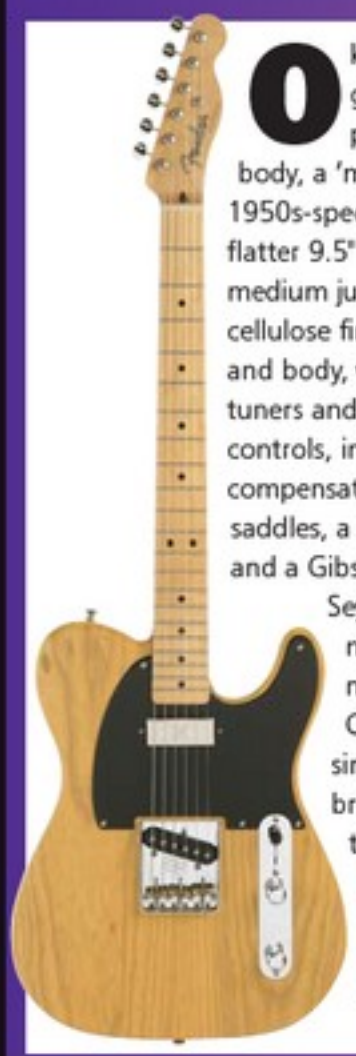
Fender Vintage Hot Rod '52

Price: £1499



Okay, how does this grab you? A premium ash body, a 'manageable' 1950s-spec neck with a flatter 9.5" radius and medium jumbo frets, nitro-cellulose finish on the neck and body, vintage-style tuners and modern style controls, intonation-compensated slanted brass saddles, a thin black 'guard and a Gibson Firebird-style Seymour Duncan mini-bucker at the neck with a Custom Vintage single coil at the bridge – and inside the tweed case lurks candy that includes a 1950s strap, a cable and a Mist & Wipe cleaning kit. Old-school vibe plus that clangy Firebird pickup… this could be killer.

SOUNDS

This thing has the tone to slay a redneck at 20 paces. The pickups are perfectly balanced and the bridge unit can cover Roy Buchanan to Keef without piercing your eardrums. It's that perfect balance of quack, sprang and grunt that leaves Strats stranded on the bridge. The neck humbucker is a revelation – woody, jazzy and clear when clean, barking, dynamic and still clean when er… dirty. Back off the tone control for the best 'woman tone' you've ever heard, or switch to the middle and hit the bottleneck. It's got everything you need for country and Chet-picking too… and that butterscotch finish has the potential to relic itself as nature intended.

VERDICT

I don't subscribe to the notion that Tele neck pickups are crap, and I'd argue that anyone who does just hasn't yet tried a good one. Nevertheless the little Seymour Duncan is the best looking and sounding alternative I have ever encountered, and this guitar is simply an outstanding addition to the Telecaster family.

FACTFILE

Description: Solid body electric guitar. Made in the USA

Price: £1499

Build: 'Premium' ash body with bolt-on 21-fret maple neck, vintage-style tuners

Electrics: Trad Tele bridge pickup plus Seymour Duncan Vintage Mini Humbucker, 3-way switch, volume, tone

FINAL SCORE

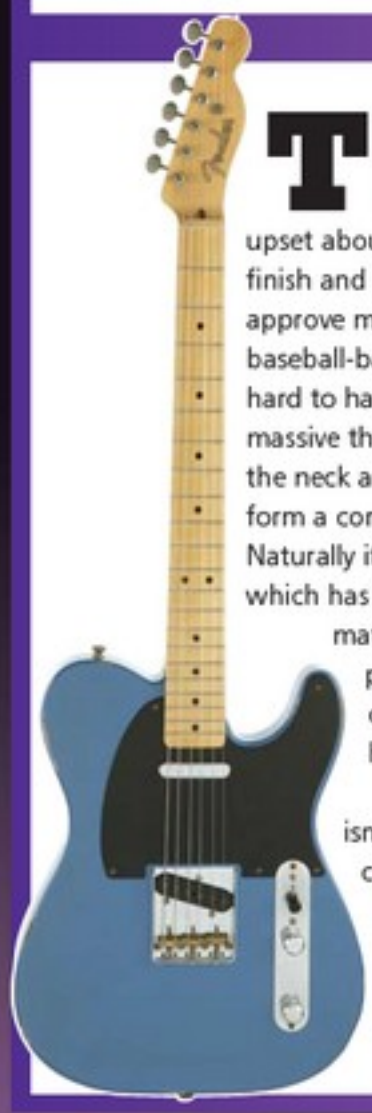
Build Quality	19/20
Playability	19/20
Sound	19/20
Value for money	19/20
Vibe	17/20
TOTAL	**93%**

Good for... country, rock, blues, bottleneck, jazz, rockabilly

Look elsewhere... metal

Fender '51 Nocaster Relic

Price: £2580



This one will divide opinions. Some will get upset about the 'relic' finish and even those who approve might find the baseball-bat neck a little hard to handle: it's so massive that the back of the neck and the headstock form a continuous line. Naturally it's all nitro, which has been aged to match the worn plastic parts and corroded hardware.

The relicing isn't entirely convincing because the virtually unworn neck doesn't match with the aged look of the body. In Lake Placid Blue this guitar looks like an old re-fin anyway, and the lacquer cracking seems a bit like crazy paving. Most of the metal, including the period-correct flat-head screws, looks the part but the bridge appears almost brand new. The black 'guard looks amazing, especially the wear and the distressed edges, but there's no 'can ring' on the back. Also, the switch tip keeps falling off because the shaft is too short.

SOUNDS

At 3.5kg (8lbs) the weight is about right for the '51 era. Acoustically the tone is vibrant and it just sang through my '51 Fender Deluxe. These aren't hot pickups but they make up for it with balance, dynamics and clarity. But there's little tonal difference between the bridge and the neck and this limitation renders the vintage style controls, where the rear knob is a pickup blender and the third setting rolls off all the treble, somewhat ineffectual.

VERDICT

A super-cool vibe with potential for outstanding tone, if you can live with the daunting neck and the archaic controls.

FACTFILE

Description: Solid body electric guitar. Made in the USA

Price: £2579.99

Build: Premium ash, bolt-on maple neck

Electrics: Three-way switch, Custom Shop pickups, volume and blend control

FINAL SCORE

Build Quality	17/20
Playability	15/20
Sound	15/20
Value for money	13/20
Vibe	17/20
TOTAL	**77%**

Good for... vintage Tele fantasists seeking retro tones with good touch-dynamics

Look elsewhere... versatility, controllability, more pickup power

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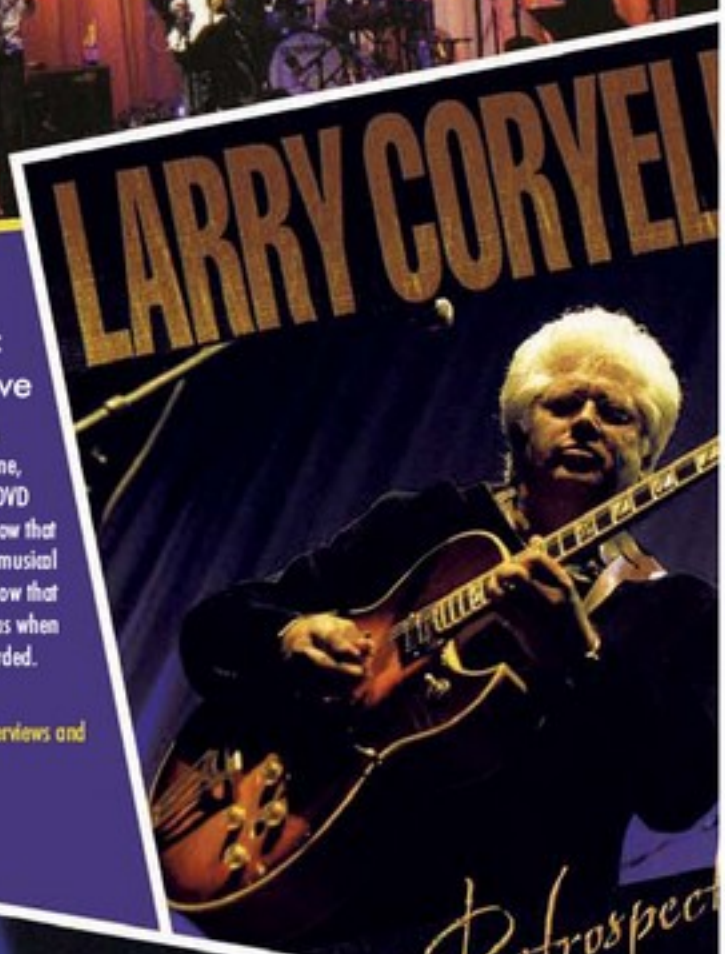

Larry Coryell: A Retrospective

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Disc 2: Extras including interviews and additional songs.

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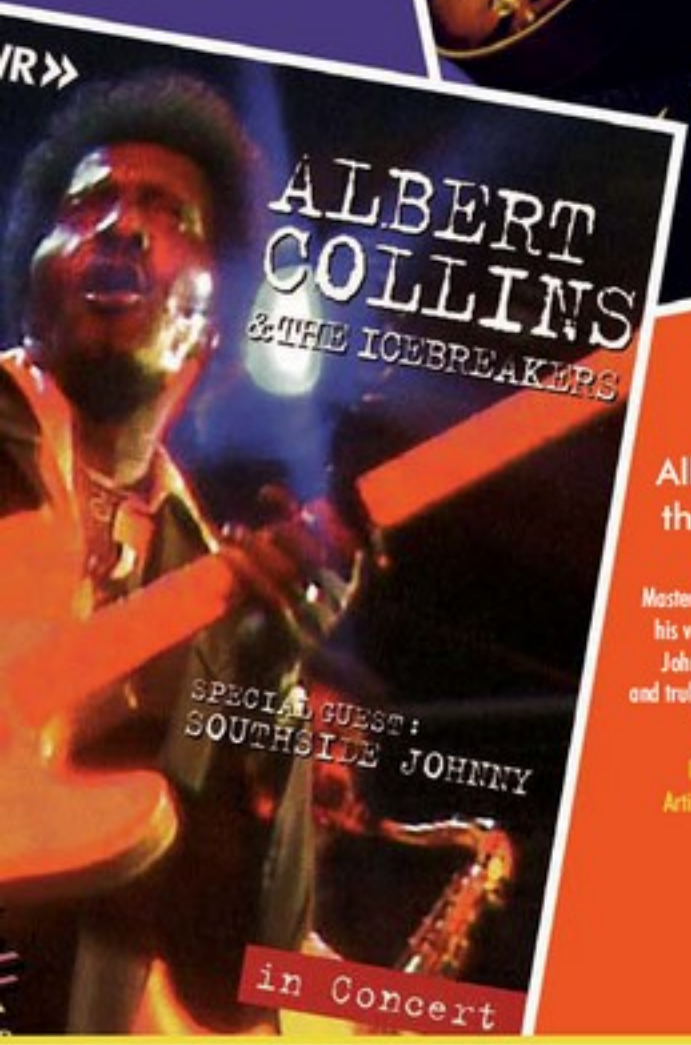

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Harmony Central

From solo work to recording with piano-playing poppet Jamie Cullum to hitting the road with veteran Stone Bill Wyman, it's all part of jazz life for the amazing Martin Taylor. Interview: Julian Piper

'Jazz is a bit like wine,' muses Martin Taylor. 'You can't give it to a kid, because they don't like the taste. It's something you discover when you get older, and your palette changes.'

Jazz has never been an easy language to learn – nor an easy music with which to earn a living: at one low point in Martin's career things were so bad that he even came close to selling his last guitar. Currently, the state of jazz is, well, almost schizophrenic. On one hand, audiences are steadily diminishing; at the same time the showboating antics of cheeky Jamie Cullum have hoodwinked a whole generation.

Martin Taylor acknowledges that fate has been kind to him; from the age of five when he first plucked his father's Hofner President, he's enjoyed a successful career and rare critical acclaim. While much of that is due to his mind-boggling ability, he readily concedes that it also has a lot to do with his instrument of choice.

'I think there's a wider appeal for my music,' he muses, 'because a lot of it's quite melodic, but the other thing of course is that I play the guitar. There are people who love the guitar whatever the kind of music being played, and they'll always come to gigs and buy CDs. I'm very grateful for that! If I played another instrument I might be confined just to the small jazz world.'

After an early apprenticeship in jazz haunts like London's 100 Club, where his bass-playing father often pulled him onstage to jam with his bands when he was just out of short pants, gypsy jazz legend Stephane

'When I was young, jazz meant more to me than rock'n'roll. I just felt that it was in my blood'

Grappelli chose the 22-year-old to occupy the seat once held by his virtuoso partner Django Reinhardt. It was an incredible accolade, and an affirmation of Taylor's consummate technique. After 11 years alongside Grappelli, he launched out on a solo career which has seen him become internationally recognised as a solo artist, guesting on more than 30 albums with other performers and making 20 of his own. Along the way he's found time to become an occasional member of Bill Wyman's band The Rhythm Kings (and receive an MBE in 2002 for his services to

Catalogue

MARTIN TAYLOR: PORTRAITS

From 1996, this collection of standards features Chet Atkins, but it's really ignited by Martin's stunning solo version of *I Got Rhythm*

MARTIN TAYLOR: SPIRIT OF DJANGO

In which the guitarist pays inspired homage to his mentor, 'Djangoising' an unlikely selection of tunes including Robert Palmer's *Johnny And Mary* and Pat Metheny's *James*

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'You can be a great musician, but if you can't communicate then you might as well stay home'

music). Not bad, you'll agree, for someone who is self-taught and left school at the age of 15.

'I started when I was young and in a strange kind of way, jazz meant more to me than rock'n'roll – I understood it from very early on,' Taylor recalls. 'It didn't hold any great mysteries for me… I just felt that it was in my blood.

'The Stones and Beatles were all played in my home when I was a kid, and the '60s were a very exciting time to be growing up. But with jazz I loved the improvisation and the fact that, harmonically and rhythmically, there was just more to discover. I always liked a good melody, and was fascinated to see what I could work around it, chord-wise. Because jazz has its roots in blues I was also listening to people like Big Bill Broonzy and Delta singers and guitar players, but compared to jazz I always felt that there were definite barriers, a point which you didn't go past.'

As Martin readily admits, his time with Grappelli taught him more than just the finer points of gypsy jazz.

No Practice Makes Perfect?

'I've never really practised as such, but I've always been fortunate to work a lot and I've thought about things I would like to play,' Martin admits. 'Sometimes it's when I'm driving along in the car. Any practise has usually been in my head.

'One of the advantages of starting out so young is that the instrument becomes part of you. I don't have to physically pick up the guitar and play it to keep my hand in. I've never felt that I get rusty even if I haven't played for a month… but I do notice that my fingers hurt!

'If anything, if I have a rest from playing the guitar, I usually find that I come back with a whole new approach and play that much better for a lay-off. Guitar's not a physical instrument, and it's another advantage that a sax player or trumpeter wouldn't get; they have all these muscles around the jaw that they need to keep supple.

'But then I've always felt that practising is no substitute for the real thing. It doesn't matter how much you practise in your room, when you get up onstage, it's a whole different ball game.

'When I started out I was fortunate that people allowed me to practise on the stage, and there were usually eight or nine musicians so I could be pretty anonymous and hide behind other people!

'I know that maybe I should say that I do 12 hours practise a day… but I just don't have the time.'

'Historically, it was Stephane and Django who invented the whole concept of European jazz; it may be a cliché but Stephane really did just go on getting better and better,' he marvels. 'We never spoke about music, he just let me play. He might make a suggestion, but that was about it. But the greatest lesson that I learnt from Stephane was just how much he enjoyed playing, and how important it was to get that over to an audience. You can be a great musician but if you can't communicate, it's all pointless – you might as well stay at home! He had a very quiet stage presence but he could mesmerise an audience with his incredible music. He might have been an absolute virtuoso on the violin but, more importantly, he was also an incredible

Photo: ©Simon Chapman 2003

Musical worlds in happy collision: Martin Taylor shares a stage with flamenco guitarist Juan Martin

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FENDER TELE 72 THINLINE NATURAL
FENDER TELE 72 CUSTOM BLACK
FENDER TELE 62 CUSTOM JAP BIGSBY CANDY RED
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entertainer. If you said that to a lot of jazz musicians they'd take that as an insult!'

So does being an entertainer come easy to Martin Taylor? 'Of course – it's the way I am,' he laughs. 'I don't have to work at being jolly or make up jokes, I just talk the way I normally would. I'm lucky that I can communicate verbally with an audience, but it's not a thing that all musicians feel comfortable doing. It's why Jamie Cullum has been so successful – he really creates a great vibe.'

So, if push comes to shove, is it better to be a technician with no performance skills, or an entertainer with just three chords?

'Technique is something that you should learn and then try and forget about,' he replies. 'I like to think of someone like Picasso. Some people might dismiss his paintings as being childlike, which on one level they were, but you knew that he had all the other stuff, too. He was a genius. What happens with jazz musicians is that because it's a complex form of music – as complex as classical music, in its own way – there's a need to learn a lot of theory and harmony, so there's a tendency for jazz musicians to take things that bit further and lose their audience. One of the best guitar lessons I had was when I was recording with Al Gray, who used to play with Count Basie. When it got time for me to take a solo I obviously wanted to impress him, but instead he stopped me and said "Martin, I don't want you to play me everything you know." As young as I was, I got his point. I was trying to put everything into 32 bars.

'There's a tendency for jazz musicians to take theory that bit further, and lose their audience'

'I've worked with a lot of musicians who were very limited technically and in terms of the breadth of what they could do, but were far more effective than many jazz musicians I know who could do everything. It's like having an incredible vocabulary and not having anything meaningful to say. Ultimately, music's about conveying emotion.'

Martin's latest album, *Freternity*, is dedicated to the memory of his youngest son Stewart, who died at the end of 2005. It was an understandably traumatic time, and it was a year before Martin felt able to play again. Now he's in no doubt that it was his music that pulled him through.

'I don't know what I would have done without it,' he sighs. 'The first gig I did was in Paris with David Reinhardt, Django's grandson, and although it was the last thing I wanted to do at the time, halfway through the first set I started feeling better than I'd done since he died.

'I realised that I had to keep on playing and that it was the best thing for me to do. I couldn't imagine living without music, and in the last year it's really come over to me how important it is to me; it keeps me going.

'Any things that come along the way, like money, are just extras, really. There's only one reason to play music – and that's for the love of it.'

The Rhythm Method

Martin Taylor's always enjoyed the challenge of working in different musical forms, and for several years he's been an occasional member of ex-Rolling Stone Bill Wyman's band The Rhythm Kings.

'I've always enjoyed working with Bill, but I wasn't actually in the band at the beginning,' he reflects. 'It was a bit like when I first started working with Stephane Grappelli – I never knew whether I was in the band or not!

'Bill contacted me originally because he wanted me to play on a couple of things that he'd recorded with Georgie Fame; he didn't have a name for the band at that time. I overdubbed about three tracks, and he said "Why don't you come back and do some more?" but I never heard from him again.

'Some time later I was at a party at his restaurant and by this time he'd formed the Rhythm Kings, and he told me that he'd done a little tour in Europe. As you do when you've had a few drinks, I said "Hey, why didn't you call me, then? That sounds like a lot of fun!" And that was it!

'I did quite a few tours fitting it in when I could, and it was really fun working with Georgie Fame and Gary Brooker. I learnt a lot about music.'

Travellers' Tales

'"Conyach" is a word used by Scottish travellers to describe the feeling you get when you're absolutely centred, absorbed and at one with the music you're playing,' Martin explains. 'I first heard it used by a relative of mine, Sheila Stewart, who goes to America to teach people how they can get that spiritual feel for what they're doing.

'Strangely, it was something that I always felt I experienced from an early age; I would sit playing, and after a while the music would totally envelop me and I would feel as though as I was actually part of the music that I was playing. It's the same kind of experience that people have when they're involved in prayer or meditation, but for me it's always been produced by playing the guitar.'

SOME OTHER FACTS

- Martin won the British Jazz Artist title for seven years in a row
- He's been awarded the Freedom of the City Of London
- He recorded the theme tune for BBC's drama After You've Gone with Jamie Cullum
- The tune *Chez Fernand* on his latest album was actually written in Django Reinhardt's favourite café

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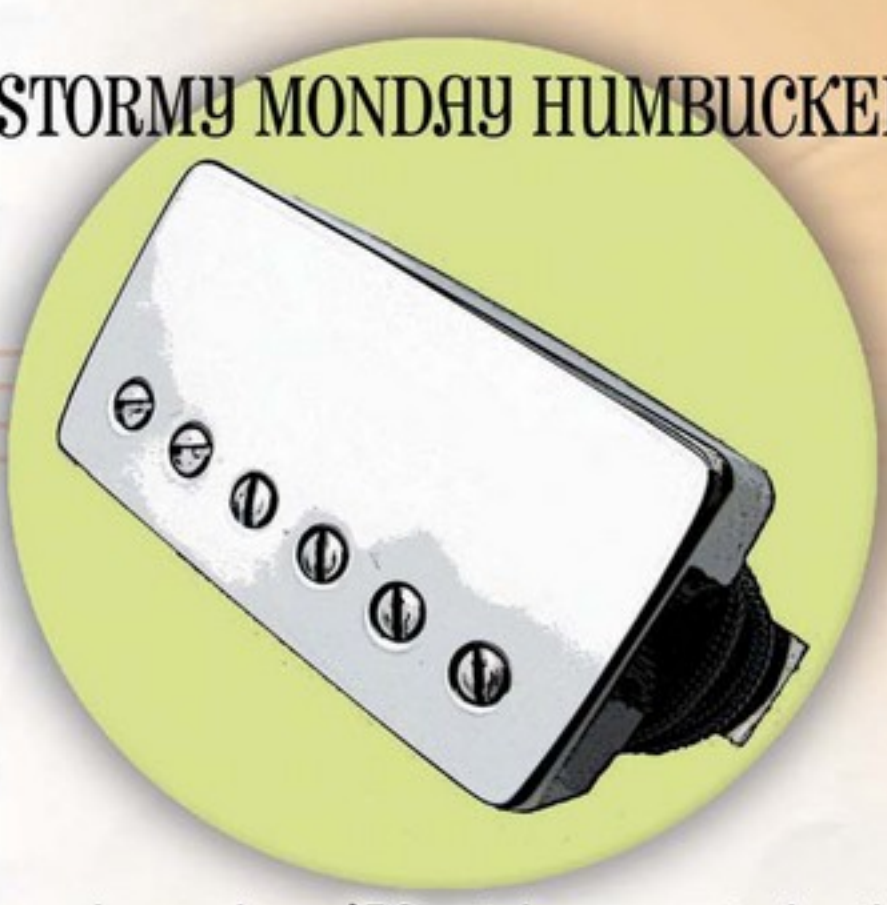

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Jimi Hendrix

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what the man's fingers touched. Play it
ninety miles an hour or fall for a million days.
Just a little voodoo to help you burn
the midnight lamp.

"Maybe you can't hear them now,
but you will if you just take hold of my hand."

James Marshall Hendrix (1942-1970)

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Photo: ©Jim Marshall

Force of NATURE

Stevie Salas's technical skills and attitude have bewitched many a music lover, and now there's a 'Best Of' CD to enjoy. Story: Patrick Jennings

If and when grandkids become part of Stevie Salas's life, he'll have a few tales to tell them, such as about playing with Rod Stewart and Mick Jagger, how he brought us Rufus's bitchin' guitar solo in *Bill And Ted's Excellent Adventure*, how he provided guitar lines for Parliament/Funkadelic legend George Clinton, or even how he appeared in the house band for the *Fame* TV series. And that's before you mention his 18-odd solo albums.

When Salas was asked to put together a compilation album of his work, *The Sun And The Earth*, he relished the challenge. 'There was so much I had to leave out because of lack of space,' he sighs. 'I had to include things like *A Dedication To You* because to go from a big fan of Mike Garson's playing with Bowie as a kid to have him on my record was something else. Also special was doing Joni Mitchell's *Amelia*, although I just learned it in the studio and forgot it instantly, so I can't do that one live!'

Salas is aware, though, that he had to include such fan faves as the lyrical triumph of syncopation that is *Indian Chief* and funk-rock monsters *Tell Your Story Walkin'* and *Blind*. '*Tell Your Story Walkin'* seems more popular now than ever,' Salas smiles. 'At one show this guy was in tears because we hadn't played it during the show, and he was scared we wouldn't do it as an encore! I couldn't help but laugh, but if somebody's that involved, then I'm not going to disappoint them.'

'When I'm in the zone I can eat anybody up. But when I'm not in the zone, I suck!'

Having worked as a musical director and producer for a number of top-level artists over the years, Salas says it comes in handy when he can grab a guitar and show somebody just how it should be done. 'It's always funnier when people don't know my history as a guitar player,' he grins, 'especially if they're younger guys. If they're weak people they'll end up hating me, but the stronger ones rise to the challenge!'

The Californian guitarist is often mentioned in the same breath as the likes of Joe Satriani, and no doubt he could have gone down the 'technical wizard' route – but it was never a serious option. 'I grew up loving music with vocals, and if I wrote an instrumental I would just assume it would be boring for people to listen to,' he maintains. 'Also, when I'm in the zone, I can eat anybody up. But when I'm not in the zone, I suck!

'I once toured with Joe Satriani for eight months and he was brilliant – really on top of it, every single night. I just don't have that kind of consistency. It used to bother me a lot... but then you see Hendrix at the Isle Of Wight or Jimmy Page on *The Song Remains The Same*, and you realise even geniuses have off-days – and that sometimes it's good to get things wrong!'

Catalogue

THE SUN AND THE EARTH: THE ESSENTIAL STEVIE SALAS VOL 1 (INVISIBLE HANDS)

Find out why Salas was once described as a mixture of Hendrix and James Brown on this double CD. There's everything from heavy-as-Kryptonite metal to blues and pop, with highlights including the razor-sharp wah-wah riff to *Crackhouse* and *I Was Made To Love Her*, a collaboration with ex-Purple man Glenn Hughes – and the funk-rock tunes will make you see the Chili Peppers and Lenny Kravitz in a whole new light

Gear

GUITARS

A frankly quite ridiculous amount, including custom Italias, Les Pauls, and plenty of junk shop specials. 'I'm only sentimental about the black Strat that I built when I was a kid, though,' says Salas 'It's the one I'd rescue from a burning building...'

AMPS

'65 Fender Deluxe Reverb, Cornford, Ashdown. 'I set a lot on fire because I load the gain to hell,' he says

EFFECTS

'Currently, some custom Dunlop stuff. I'm obsessed by midrange!'

And Another Thing: Stevie's wah sound on *Tell Your Story Walkin'* was obtained on a children's guitar toy. Its sound became the basis of his Guyatone signature pedal

Magic Bullitt

McQueen have been slaying all who stand before them. Patrick Jennings finds out how guitarist Cat De Casanove rocks the room

Having made their bones touring with acts as wide-ranging as shock rockers WASP to indie high-fliers Kaiser Chiefs, Brighton quartet McQueen have honed their fearsome brand of punk rock to a diamond-sharp edge. So when the time came to record their debut album, *Break The Silence*, the band realised that their biggest test was ensuring that their live mojo didn't get lost in the production. 'There's all this great technology these days, but 99 per cent of the time it was all down to a big Marshall stack in the studio with the doors closed because it was turned up to the max,' recalls guitarist Cat De Casanove (pictured above, far left). She reached her rock apotheosis on the track *Bitch*, with two Marshalls turned up to 11. 'You could hear this dangerous buzz when you walked into the room. Yes, I was wearing earplugs! When I turned on the distortion there was this incredible noise, and when I started whacking the guitar, it felt like an earthquake. The building was shaking!'

'When I turned on the distortion there was this incredible noise. The building was shaking!'

It's not all blood and thunder in McQueenland. There may be a big bastard riff driving it all, usually coated in De Casanove's secret weapon, an AXL distortion pedal, but there are some tasty harmonies, too. 'I'm really bad for adding counter-melodies until the rest of the band just drag me out of the studio,' Cat declares. 'I do take into account the fact that I have do it live, though – I just make sure that I have the spine of the song and whack up the volume so nobody notices, or change the parts so that they only drop in the verse or chorus.'

All this noise is a far cry from her first band, which concentrated on early rock'n'roll covers such as *Johnny B Goode* and *Roll Over Beethoven*. 'Well, they were the first bits of lead guitar I learned,' explains Cat. 'My brother taught me how to play, starting off with simple Beatles and Elvis stuff.'

Although the odd sprinkling of Telecaster dust was added to the record, De Casanove is usually permanently welded to her Les Paul Standard. 'I started out on Fenders, but to get the big fat sound this band needs I had to get a Les Paul. I didn't get it because of Slash – although I'm a big fan – but I agree with him… they just rock!'

Lately, Cat has been trying out Gibson's lightweight Les Paul Goddess with simplified volume and tone controls and a wraparound bridge. 'It's a bit brighter than the Standard, but it's still a fat Les Paul sound,' she recommends. 'It's really easy to play, although it's taken a while to get used to the weight – I'm so used to having the Standard hanging around my neck like a log.

'I suppose the Goddess might be aimed at women, but I don't see any reason why men can't play them too. I grew up wanting to play Les Pauls and I never felt as if they weren't supposed to be for me – but if more women play guitar because it's lighter, or a certain colour, that's great. I don't care how anybody gets interested in playing the guitar, just as long as they do!'

Catalogue

BREAK THE SILENCE (DEMOLITION)

The Brighton-based combo bring the noise with enough melody amongst the mayhem to allow for bopping as well as moshing. Cat De Casanove knows when to supply route-one riffage but can deliver tasty lead parts when required – *Not For Sale* being a superior example of the latter

Gear

GUITARS, AMPS, FX

Cat uses a Gibson Les Paul Standard, a Les Paul Goddess and a Fender Telecaster. Her amp is a Marshall Dual Super Lead 2000, and effects include an AXL Distortion and 'a lot of Boss pedals'

And Another Thing: McQueen gigs can end with a 'musical orgasm'. 'It's hard work for our drummer, as she has to go bonkers around the kit for about 15 minutes!'

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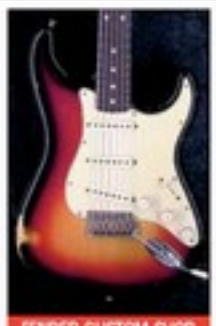

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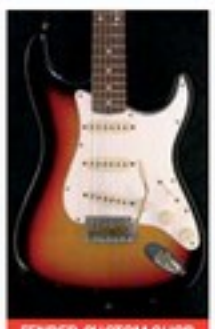

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Guitar ROCK LEGENDS

Reasons To Name Drop

John Entwistle

He played stoically on while all around him was smashed to smithereens. Michael Heatley hones The Who bassist's finest moments down just enough for a normal mortal to handle in one go

1. HE PLAYED THE MY GENERATION SOLO

Entwistle put the very first rock bass solo on record with the title track of The Who's 1965 album. He started recording the track with a Danelectro, but breakages occurred and, with replacement short-scale strings impossible to secure, Entwistle bought three entire basses in an attempt to finish the song. In the end, so legend has it, he settled for a Precision, playing a simplified part with a pick. But it was still awesome.

2. HE SOUGHT THE PERFECT SOUND

Entwistle always looked for the perfect sound to cut through the Who's considerable instrumental and vocal 'competition'. His first instrument, homemade through economic necessity, was improvised by obtaining a piece of mahogany that was roughly the shape of a Fender body. He completed his handiwork on his grandmother's prized dining-room table, and permanently damaged its surface. The search went on, somewhat less traumatically, with Alembic basses in the 1970s, Warwick in the '80s and Status in the '90s.

3. HE WAS A 'HORNY' PERFORMER

John came to bass in a wayward way via piano (which he hated), trumpet and then French horn, which he played so well he was promoted to the ranks of the Middlesex Schools Orchestra. It proved a handy talent, as he performed and arranged all The Who's studio brass arrangements through to 1989. He'd later credit the combination of his school training on those various instruments for giving his fingers their impressive strength and dexterity.

4. HE WAS DISASTROUS AS A BANDLEADER

IN 1974, after recording four solo albums and with The Who seemingly at a standstill, an impatient Entwistle took his own band, The Ox, on the road in Britain and the US. 'If I couldn't tour with The Who then I had to find my own way,' he explained later, adding that he also wanted 'to prove exactly how much I contributed to The Who'. It turned out to be a pretty expensive lesson. 'Most of us had a good time, and it cost me £720,000...'

Entwistle toured the UK and US with his band in 1974. 'Most of us had a good time. It cost £720,000'

5. HE HAD A SENSE OF HUMOUR

John's second solo album *Whistle Rymes* (1972) was so titled because he was pissed off with journalists putting an unwanted 'h' into his surname. Only those in the know got the joke, as the title is still regularly mis-spelled today. Someone else who didn't see the funny side of The Ox was first wife, Alison, for whom classic *Who's Next* track *My Wife* was written after an argument. 'The story kind of came true in the end,' said John, 'but it was her lawyers who were after me – not her.'

6. HE WANTED TO BE MUCH LOUDER

In the mid '60s, Entwistle was one of the first bassists to make use of Marshall stacks. He started using them in order to hear himself over Moon's drums, so – inevitably – Townshend then had to use them to be heard over Entwistle. They both continued expanding their rigs, using twin stacks with 200W amps at a time when 100W amps and single cabinets were considered extreme, and encouraged Cream and the Jimi Hendrix Experience to follow suit. 'On the next shows, we're trying to take the stage volume level down so we can hear each other properly,' the older, wiser and slightly deafer bassist confessed in 1996. 'In-ear monitoring is an interesting idea but it wouldn't work for me unless I could have something on my feet to give me the vibration I need.'

7. HE KICKED OFF AT WOODSTOCK

Like George Harrison in The Beatles, John Entwistle's songwriting aspirations had to live in the shadow of genius, in his case Pete Townshend. Not, he claimed, that it really bugged him: 'I never

Catalogue

THE WHO: MY GENERATION

The Who's first LP contained *The Ox*, Entwistle's Mod-style take-off on *Wipe Out*

THE WHO: QUADROPHENIA

This 1973 concept classic had more of Entwistle in it than *Tommy* did. Dig the horns on *5.15*

THE WHO: WHO ARE YOU

The last Who-with-Moon album, with three Ox songs: *905*, *Had Enough* and *Trick Of The Light* – which featured a nine-string bass!

Gear

GUITARS

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AMPS

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EFFECTS

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'I never wanted The Who to do more of my songs, because I thought at the time they'd mess them up'

wanted The Who to do more of my songs 'cos I thought at the time they'd mess them up,' he later said, reckoning their versions of his songs were 'too clean' thanks to the number of takes the others insisted on. He may not have had too many songs in the band's repertoire, but his *Heaven And Hell* was the set opener at Woodstock in 1969 – though ironically it never appeared on a Who studio album.

Frankenstein Lives!

While Entwistle is strongly identified with his graphite Status Buzzard, a maple-neck Precision named 'Frankenstein' was his pride and joy. He played it on *Tommy*, *Live At Leeds* and *Who's Next* before retiring it in favour of a Gibson Thunderbird.

Frankenstein was born in San Francisco in 1967 during a rare day off during a Who tour. 'I took the pickup and scratchplate from a slab Precision, the neck from another, machineheads from a Jazz, the body off a sunburst Precision and the bridge from another,' he recalled. 'Two hours with a screwdriver and a soldering iron and I was ranting around my hotel room screaming "It's alive, it's alive!"'

The 'slab' Precisions, Entwistle explained, were an important part of the mix. 'They only made about 20 of them. They were like white, squared-off Telecasters with a split pickup, a maple neck, black scratchplate and what looked like blue veins coming through the white paintwork. Those basses had a sound of their own, really raunchy with more of a growl.' The sunburst guitar, later refinished in salmon pink after it was retired from stage work in the mid '70s, had been expected to fetch up to $11,500 at auction in 2003 but sold for $100,550 (£62,400) – almost 10 times the original estimate.

8. HE WAS THE ULTIMATE GUITAR COLLECTOR

By the time of his death Entwistle had amassed an impressive selection of instruments in his Cotswolds mansion and these were catalogued in a book, *Bass Culture: The John Entwistle Collection*. Sadly, they had to be sold off by his family to pay death duties. (Ironically John had been an Inland Revenue employee before he became a professional musician.) Entwistle's collection of 150 guitars, 33 game fish, celebrity sketches, posters and gold discs went under the hammer at Sotheby's in May 2003 and sold for a total of £1,093,372 ($1,761,798).

9. HE BEAT McCARTNEY

When Entwistle was voted 'Bassist Of The Millennium' in this very magazine's poll, the honour afforded him more than a wry smile. He had become used to finishing behind McCartney in such popularity contests, but this time he left Macca, Wyman and John Paul Jones eating his dust. On Entwistle's passing, Bill Wyman hailed his late friend as 'the quietest man in private but the loudest onstage... he was unique and irreplaceable.'

10. HE WENT OUT WITH HIS BOOTS ON

Suitably for a man whose life was dedicated to live performance, John Entwistle passed away on the road, just one day before the scheduled first show of The Who's US tour in 2002. The number of the actual room at the Hard Rock Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas in which he died has remained a closely guarded secret, ostensibly to prevent it becoming a shrine or place of pilgrimage. 'We would prefer that the room number never get publicly identified, out of respect for John Entwistle and the band,' said Don Marrandino, Hard Rock president, adding with remarkable tact: 'I think a room a guy dies in is not a positive marketing opportunity.'

AND ANOTHER THING

His ability to eat, drink and indulge more than the rest of the band led to his 'Ox' nickname

As a frustrated lead player, he said The Who hadn't got a 'proper bassist'

A talented artist, he did the artwork of Who By Numbers and exhibited his work around the world

Boris The Spider was written after a drinking session with Stones bassist Bill Wyman

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214e	£949	£725	414ce	£1849	£1299
314	£1249	£845	514ce	£2649	£1999
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Price: £1950

Pink Floyd, Robyn Hitchcock, Rees guitars: Cambridge and weird rock just go together. Huw Price checks out a maker with a different slant

Rees

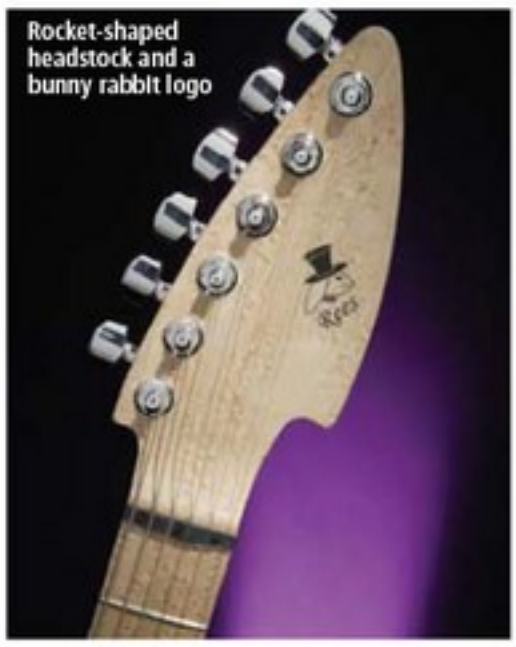
F7S Electric Guitar

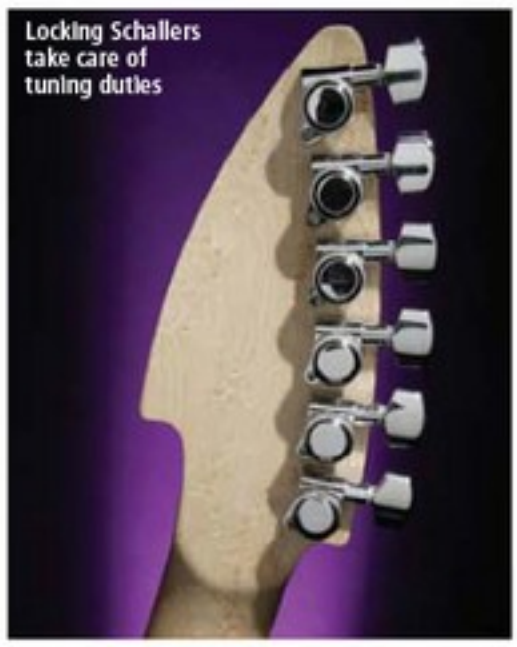
Fantasy guitars often seem to be an amalgam of features from various classic instruments, and that's certainly the case with the Rees F7S. You get a stunning bolt-on birdseye maple neck with a chambered mahogany body with an f-hole and a hand-carved flame maple top. Hardware includes a wrapover Schaller stop tail bridge recessed into the top and an 'electrics for all seasons' arrangement of two Seymour Duncan Trembuckers with a Duncan Quarter Pounder single coil in the centre, each with its own volume and tone and individual switching that includes coil taps for the 'buckers. This might all look a bit much – but the 'S' in F7S stands for 'Studio', and Rees also makes a regular F7 for stage use with a much simpler control layout.

The necks are actually bought from Warmouth, and Rees cuts out his own headstock shape before applying the water-based finish and dressing the frets. The mahogany back has an unusual chambered design: it's solid around the neck joint, beneath the bridge and between the lower cutaway and the controls, but hollowed out beneath the pickups, and there's a U-shaped chamber that extends from the upper cutaway around the back of the bridge into the control area. The idea is to decouple the working core of the guitar from the rims to minimise the vibration-dampening effect of a player's body or clothes. Like the control cavity, that hollow space beneath the pickups has a mahogany cover. Removing it allows you to unplug the pickups and replace them without removing the strings.

Another Rees quirk is the neck joint. The neck has 24 frets but the last two sit on an extension of the maple fingerboard cap, so the neck actually joins a very thin mahogany ledge, protruding from the body, at the 16th fret. Three carbon fibre strips strengthen the ledge, and there's a small brass plate for the two front screws, while the rear two are set into gold-plated cups.

The idea is to improve access to the upper frets, but this ungainly arrangement isn't really much of an improvement on a regular Fender-style joint; the chamfered-style three- or four-bolt joint used by Music Man and many others feels and looks a lot better. If the neck was solid all the way to the 24th fret Rees could have used a more conventional four-bolt





You get a stunning birdseye maple neck, a chambered mahogany body and a hand-carved flamed maple top

First Impressions

Luscious maple, a plethora of switches and a very individual sense of style

FACTFILE

REES F7S

Description: Semi-solid body electric guitar. Made in the UK

Price: £1950 inc. case

Build: Flame maple capped chambered mahogany body with bolt-on birdseye maple neck, 24-fret rosewood fingerboard, Schaller bridge, Schaller locking tuners

Electrics: Two Seymour Duncan Trembuckers and one Duncan Quarter Pounder. Three 3-way switches, individual dual concentric volume and tone controls

Left-hander: No

Finish options: Just ask

Scale Length:
25.5"/628 mm

Neck width:
Nut 42mm
12th fret 51.5mm

Depth of neck:
First fret 20mm
12th fret 21mm

String spacing:
Nut 36mm
Bridge 53mm

Action as supplied:
12th fret treble 2mm
12th fret bass 2mm

Weight: 3.1kg/6.8lb

Contact: Rees Guitars
☎ 07889 160660

Web:
www.rees-electric-guitars.com

THE COMPETITION

MAYONESS
SeGTM Lizard
A double cut with a similarly rough-and-ready vibe that oozes tone
RRP: £770

MELANCON
Custom Artist T
A mahogany/maple sandwich with a pair of DiMarzio humbuckers and split/series/parallel switching options plus a bolt-on mahogany neck
RRP: £2494

PRS Hollowbody I
Built in a similar manner with a solid block under the bridge, a flamey maple top and carved-out mahogany back and sides with a set 22-fret neck
RRP: £2995

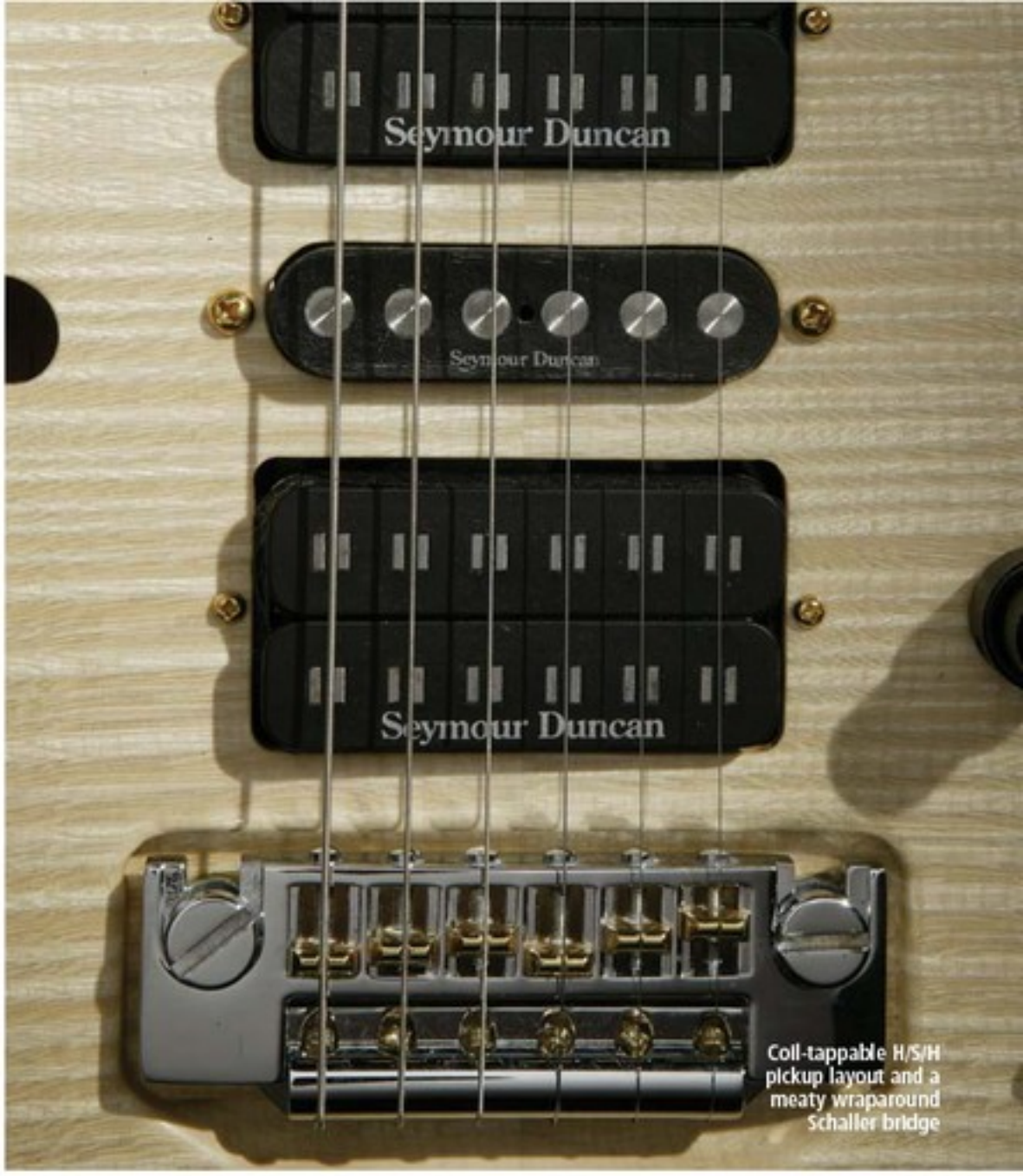
arrangement with a 19th fret joint… but at least this design means you can swap the neck for any S-style replacement. The good news is that the F7S's neck has a fantastic wide C-shaped profile that feels pleasantly chunky, and the frets are very well dressed and polished.

This guitar has some optional extras including two bands of brass inlaid around the sides studded with abalone rectangles, and an Earvana compensated nut for improved intonation. Rees usually fits Fender roller nuts as standard. Since the body is very light the added weight of the locking tuners makes the neck a tad heavy on the strap, but it's fine when played in a seated position.

This guitar has issues. The accuracy of the mahogany back covers is poor, the carving around the mahogany heel extension is a bit shoddy, and the matt black paint inside the pickup and control cavities has been applied with very little care. The pickup circuitboard is crooked and loose on one side, and the body's polymer finish looks like it has been wiped on with a cloth. It's a job that any DIY-er might justifiably be proud of but it doesn't stack up against other guitars in this price range. It's odd considering the excellent quality neck finish, but we hear that Rees is now using a different finish method for the maple cap.

SOUNDS

The unplugged tone is excellent with magnificent sustain and clarity and a warm, full-bodied resonance. Even high single notes on the unwound strings have the thickness and body you'd associate with a quality acoustic guitar. Better still, the amplified tone is just as good. This guitar really sings,

Unusual 'stepped' neck to body joint, reinforced with carbon-fibre

Coil-tappable H/S/H pickup layout and a meaty wraparound Schaller bridge

This guitar really sings, and despite its 'studio' name it can also dish the dirt. It's no executive blues guitar

and despite its 'studio' name, it can also really dish the dirt. If you're looking for one of those 'executive blues' guitars, this isn't it.

The bridge Trembucker is fat and loud with a big midrange. The acoustic character adds considerable bass wallop and the high frequencies cuts through cleanly. Although it's well voiced for distorted rock, this pickup also offers fine clean tones with plenty of compression and bark. The neck humbucker is cleaner, brighter and clearer; more of the acoustic tone comes through, and rolling off the treble gives a convincing jazz tone. In combination with the bridge, the neck feeds in some natural playing dynamics and adds a bit of high-end sparkle.

The single coil matches the neck for volume and it's not too bright with an amp set up for humbuckers. This position gives you a flavour of S-style quack but the snappy highs are tempered by a degree of warmth and woodiness in the low mids. Things get even more Stratty when you start combining the 'buckers with the single coil; for a '50s tone use them coil tapped, and for a 'rosewood' '60s sound switch back to double coils. Most sounds outside pure jazz or super-sharp country are within the F7S's capabilities, and the knobs and switches provide a huge variety of tones. Our only gripe is that the treble rolls off too quickly when you turn down the volumes, rendering the tone knobs surplus to requirements.

VERDICT

Despite its fit and finish issues, the F7S has considerable charm. It's one of the nicest-playing and best set-up guitars to have passed through *Guitar & Bass* in quite some time, and it sounds excellent. As a recording engineer I think the concept of a 'studio guitar' is questionable, but Rees has succeeded in creating something unique and special. If you value tone and playability more highly than clinical build quality and a flawless finish, you really should try one out.

FINAL SCORE

Build Quality	12/20
Playability	19/20
Sound	19/20
Value for money	13/20
Vibe	15/20
TOTAL	**78%**

Good for... metal, blues rock, jazz, funk

Look elsewhere... for big-bodied jazzbox and chicken-pickin' country tones

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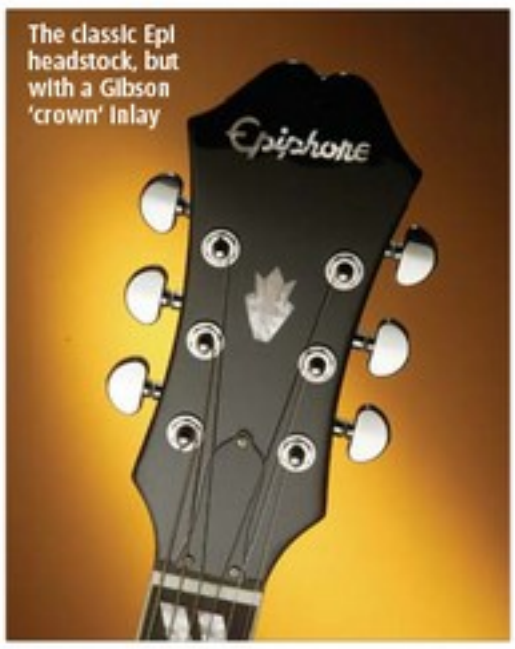
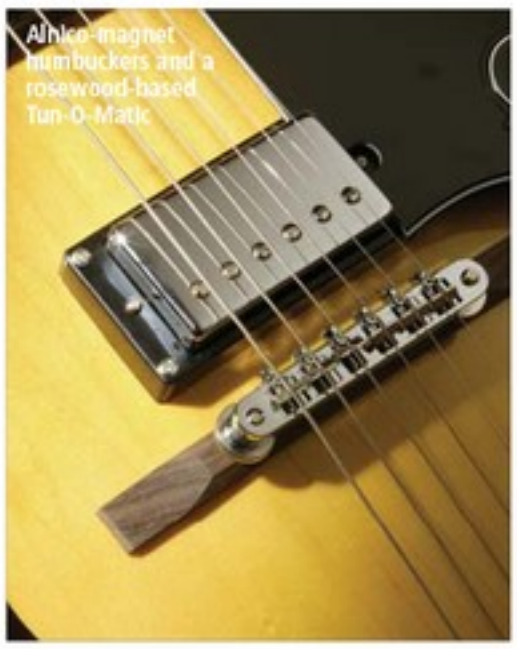
Time to get some air in your tone! Here's Martyn Casserly with a couple of cost-effective Epiphone versions of two Gibson semis

Epiphone

ES-175 & ES-135 Semi-Acoustics

Epiphone is a company with a fantastic pedigree in the hollowbody/semi-acoustic area – after all, its jazzers pushed Gibson all the way during the 1930s with innovative and classy designs before the company was finally bought out by the Kalamazoo giant in the late '50s. Today Epiphone is mainly known as the brand applied to inexpensive versions of actual Gibsons and to reissues of Gibson-made Epiphones from the '60s. On review this month are two of the former: an affordable ES-175, a take on Gibson's ultimate workhorse jazzer, and a version of the thinline ES-135 of the 1990s but with PAF-style pickups instead of P100 humbuckers.





ES-175

Opening the rather smart Epiphone hard case we're greeted with a very beautiful guitar, with the vintage sunburst and the f-holes piercing the laminate maple top reminding us of this model's rich lineage. The mahogany body is bound in cream and attractively finished, while the set-neck is maple with a rosewood fingerboard topped by 20 medium-gauge frets and split parallelogram inlays. The deco trapeze tailpiece manages to look ornate without being vulgar, and the Tun-O-Matic bridge is attached to a rosewood base. A set of kidney-button Grovers take care of tuning duties but drop half a point for anorakish vintage authenticity, the pickups are Alnico Classic humbuckers controlled by the standard two volumes, two tones and a three-way switch.

First Impressions

A classic jazz guitar with all the trimmings

SOUNDS

Acoustically, the ES-175 is fairly loud, though it has a boxy tone that reminds you that's it's all-laminated and has assorted large chunks of metal hanging off it. Nonetheless, it's an interesting sound. Plugging into a vintage-style valve amp the neck pickup immediately grabs your attention. It's warm and strong with a percussive nature; lead lines flow naturally and chords are

The bridge pickup is warm and strong, the neck pickup sharp and cutting. It's a classy guitar to play

FINAL SCORE

Build Quality	17/20
Playability	17/20
Sound	18/20
Value for money	15/20
Vibe	18/20
TOTAL	**85%**

Good for... Jazz lead and rhythm, '40s and '50s electric blues, clean work in general

Look elsewhere... If you're a high-gain or extremely high-volume player

FACTFILE

ES-175

Description: Hollowbody electric guitar. Made in Korea

Price: £725 inc. hard case

Build: Mahogany back and sides, laminate maple top, maple set neck with 20-fret rosewood fingerboard, deco trapeze tailpiece, Tun-O-Matic bridge, Grover tuners

Electrics: Two Alnico Classic humbuckers, three-way selector, two volume controls, two tone controls.

Left-handers: No

Finish: Vintage sunburst

Scale length: 628mm/24.75"

Neck width:
Nut 42mm
12th fret 51mm

Depth of neck:
First fret 21.5mm
12th fret 40 mm

String spacing:
Nut 37.5mm
Bridge 52mm

Action as supplied
12th fret treble 2mm
12th fret bass 3mm

Weight: 2.73kgs/6lbs

Contact: Rosetti
☎ 01376 550033

Web: www.rosetti.co.uk

THE COMPETITION

VINTAGE VSA-575
Highly affordable take on the ES-175 from a company currently turning out some stunning guitars for very little money
RRP: £399

WASHBURN J5
Single cutaway hollowbody with twin humbuckers and other standard jazz accoutrements
RRP: £329

YAMAHA AEX1500
Single cutaway, big bodied jazzer with a difference. One mini-humbucker in the neck and one piezo in the bridge
RRP: Approx. £1000

Price: £765

FACTFILE

ES-135

Description: Semi-solid body electric guitar. Made in Korea

Price: £765 inc. hard case

Build: Mahogany body, laminated maple top, maple set-neck, 22-fret rosewood fingerboard, trapezoid tailpiece, Tun-O-Matic bridge, Grover tuners

Electrics: Two '59 PAF-style humbuckers, three-way switch, two volume controls and two tone controls

Finish: Blueburst

Scale length:
628mm/24.75"

Neck width:
Nut 43mm
12th fret 52mm

Depth of neck:
First fret 19mm
12th fret 22mm

String spacing:
Nut 38mm
Bridge 51mm

Action as supplied
12th fret treble 2.5mm
12th fret bass 3.5mm

Weight: 3.86kg/8.5lbs

Contact: Rosetti
☎ 01376 550033

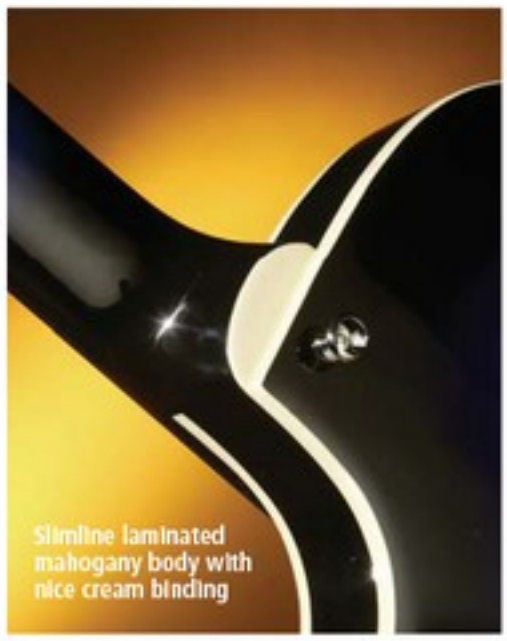
Web: www.rosetti.co.uk

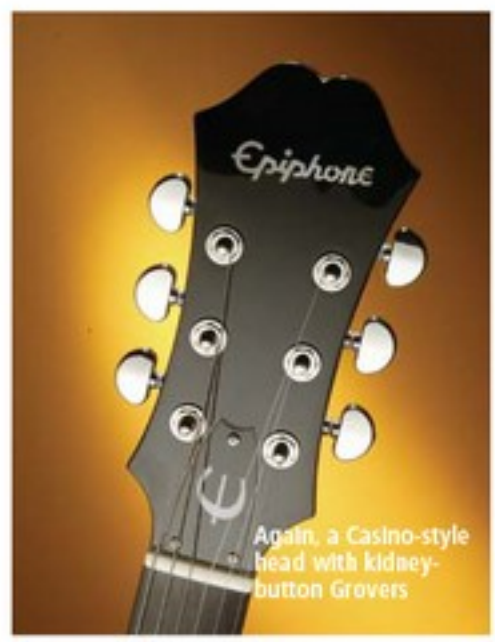
THE COMPETITION

WASHBURN
WI-67Pro
Semi-acoustic with twin humbuckers and Washburn's Voice Contour Control that allows you to mix between single coil and humbucking sounds. Top class
RRP: £549

FENDER
'72 Thinline Tele
Mexican-made semi-hollow with twin humbuckers and loads of attitude. As lightweight as a bag of fairy wishes, too
RRP: £749

HOFNER Verythin CT
As the name suggests this is a slim-profile semi. Twin humbuckers and loads of vintage appeal
RRP: £425


Slimline laminated mahogany body with nice cream binding



Again, a Casino-style head with kidney-button Grovers

Classic '60s/'70s sounds just leap out at you: Stones, Beatles, Bowie – the ES-135 can handle them all

open and rich with the lower strings occasionally becoming slightly dominant – but rolling off the volume soon adjusts that. Combining both pickups adds some snap, and the bridge pickup is sharp and cutting for standing out in a mix. Overall it's a very classy guitar both to play and listen to.

ES-135

The ES-135 has a more workmanlike feel, and like the real Gibson version it has a slightly odd look since the bridge – a screwed-in Tun-O-Matic – is shoved further up the body and doesn't align with the 'nicks' on the f-holes. The reason: the ES-135 has not 20 but 22 frets, with a 16th fret body join. The body is made from laminated mahogany and maple and carries a full-length internal centre-block, and the whole thing is finished in a dark blueburst with cream binding, with the fancy fingerboard inlays replaced by standard dots and the ornate tailpiece by a simpler raised-diamond type. The pickups are '59 PAF-style humbuckers, with the same familiar controls.

The ES-135's neck is a lot slimmer than the ES-175's chunky, more trad version. It's also heavier. The fingerboard has a generic Korean feel, but after a bit of playing it becomes a pleasant place to work, and the acoustic sound is bright and springy.

First Impressions

Nice colour, great shape, big weight, should sound terrific

SOUNDS

With a clean amp the ES-135's neck pickup has a lot of character and warmth. Arpeggios are articulate and general chord work is bright and full. Both pickups combined adds more bite, and the bridge pickup on its own is wiry and aggressive. Adding overdrive really opens up the sound of this guitar.

With moderate gain many classic sounds from the '60s and '70s just leap out at you: Stones, Beatles, Bowie – the ES-135 can handle them all. Blues and alternative rock sounds are easy to find. High gain is always a bit hairy with semis but the ES-135 copes reasonably well on the feedback stakes. Ultimately it's in its element in the raucous overdrive stage rather than full-on distortion, but boy is it fun when you're in the zone.

VERDICT

A quick look at the prices of these guitars might have some of you wondering why you should pay over £700 for a 'budget' brand, but that would be missing the point. Although Epiphone is Gibson's cheap alternative, there's little sign of that in these models. Quality workmanship, classic sounds and great playability mean inspiring instruments that are easily worth the asking price – not forgetting that street prices tend to be even cheaper. The ES-175 is an attractive jazzer that provides all the style, sound and playability you would expect from a company that's been making archtop guitars for over 80 years, while in the ES-135 Epiphone has a fantastic workhorse guitar that could find its way into almost anyone's arsenal and hold its own. What's more, you really need have no nagging feeling that you've settled for second-best.

FINAL SCORE

Build Quality	17/20
Playability	18/20
Sound	18/20
Value for money	15/20
Vibe	17/20
TOTAL	**85%**

Good for... rock, indie, blues, jazz
Look elsewhere... high-gain styles

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Price: £498

With its full metal jacket, Orange's baby is designed to provide righteous crunch sounds at studio-friendly volumes. Review: David Petersen

Orange

Tiny Terror Amp & 1x12" Cab

Metal cases used to be the format of choice for industrial and PA equipment. They were never popular for stage amps – tough, certainly, but they soon looked as if they'd been dragged down the road, not carried. Knowing this, Orange have provided their Tiny Terror with a smart gigbag to protect against the obvious dangers of life on the road. Why give themselves the trouble? Well, the advantage of this method of construction over the traditional covered wooden case hasn't lost its appeal – anything that can be pressed, folded and printed wins hands-down on cost, once the tooling's done. Also, today's shift towards home and studio means road knocks are much less of a daily risk. The Tiny Terror amp is squarely aimed at this sort of use.

We're suckers for this kind of novelty, but it has to be practical. The casing is tough and smart (so far, anyway), with the usual jaunty Orange graphics in a nicely produced acrylic finish. The padded nylon fabric shoulder bag looks to be up to its job, and includes a useful storage zip-pocket for cables and other accessories. This arrangement offers some protection to the control knobs (they're usually recessed in a conventional amp head), but they need to be considered when the amp isn't in its bag.

First Impressions

Interesting to see a low-power studio amp in head'n'cab format, and the shoulder bag is great for loading in at gigs

The Tiny Terror's class A push-pull design gives a solid 15W of output, with an option to switch down to 7W

Electrically, the Tiny Terror's class A push-pull design, contrasting with one or two competitors in this area by not being single-ended, gives a solid 15W of output. This is a bit too solid for some uses, and its power selector switch offers a 7W option, by tapping the transformer to give about 80V less on the supply. The hardware is good – metal toggle switches, a jewel pilot lamp, and business-like control knobs support an overall impression of durable fitness. Internally, a unitary printed circuit ties everything neatly together in what's by now the conventional way. The assembly isn't pressed for space and the transformers are generously dimensioned despite the amp's compact overall size.

The 1x12" cab is a mini-me version of Orange's traditional 2x12" and 4x12"s. It's not unwieldy, certainly a one-hand carry, but compared to the head's ultra-compact look it seems big for its job. In a non-mobile context this won't be a problem – the spare margins around the amp are ideal for drinks, ashtrays (if allowed), and so on – but those tempted by the amp's shoulder bag into braving public transport should consider the possibilities carefully. Perhaps a lower-powered cab with a 10" speaker and smaller overall dimensions could be a useful option here, particularly as the Celestion G12K-100 unit fitted to this cab is working at less than half of its saturation limit with the amp flat out.

SOUNDS

Power-up is uneventful, although it's good practice to leave the power switch on its Standby position for a while. The noise-floor is unobtrusive, in fact stony silent until you plug in and unmute the preamp. Then, although it gets audible with Gain and Volume well advanced, it's always low compared to the sound output. Halfway settings on all three controls with the amp set at 15W give a useful clean sound level with a Strat, and start to transit into semi-dirty tones with a Les Paul. To get clean with

FACTFILE

TINY TERROR

Specifications: Orange Tiny Terror amp, RRP £299; 1x12" cab RRP £199. Amp: 15W all-valve with 7W output option. Two EL84 output valves, two 12AX7 preamp valves

Front panel: Single jack input; Gain, Tone, Volume controls; jewel pilot lamp; 7W/15W output selector; Off/Standby/On switch

Rear panel: IEC socket/fuse assembly; HT fuse; 16 Ohm output jack; paired 8 Ohm output jacks

Cab: Single 12" IB cabinet with 16 Ohm Celestion G12K-100 driver. Paired input jacks

Dimensions/weight:

Amp: 30cm wide, 14cm high, 13cm deep. Cab: 55cm wide, 45cm high, 20cm deep

Weight:
Amp 6kg, cab 14kg

Accessories: All cables and padded gigbag for amp included in price

Contact:
Orange Music/OMEC
☎ 0208 905 2828

Web: www.orangeamps.com

THE COMPETITION

MARSHALL
1974X combo
UK build and handwiring command a higher price, but a shootout between the Marshall and the Orange wouldn't be a one-sided contest by any means
RRP: £999

VOX
AC15CC1X combo
Fab all-rounder fitted with the reference for all guitar speakers, but it could take some hits from the Orange in the crunch zone. Dangerously close in price due to similar origin of manufacture: this contest will likely be decided by the 'cool' factor
RRP: £485

humbuckers you could pull back on the Gain, but backing off the guitar gives an equal result with a slight crunch to hand if wanted.

The tonality is dominated by mid and high-mid colouration with both guitars, with an agreeably musical woodiness always present. With the Strat, this slightly nasal quality benefits the neck pickup but sounds a bit emphatic with the other two. The tone control can be used to good effect in this area, but much of the Tiny Terror's character is created by this tonality and it's a shame to suppress it. The maximum volume level is unexpectedly giggable, although that's not this amp's primary function.

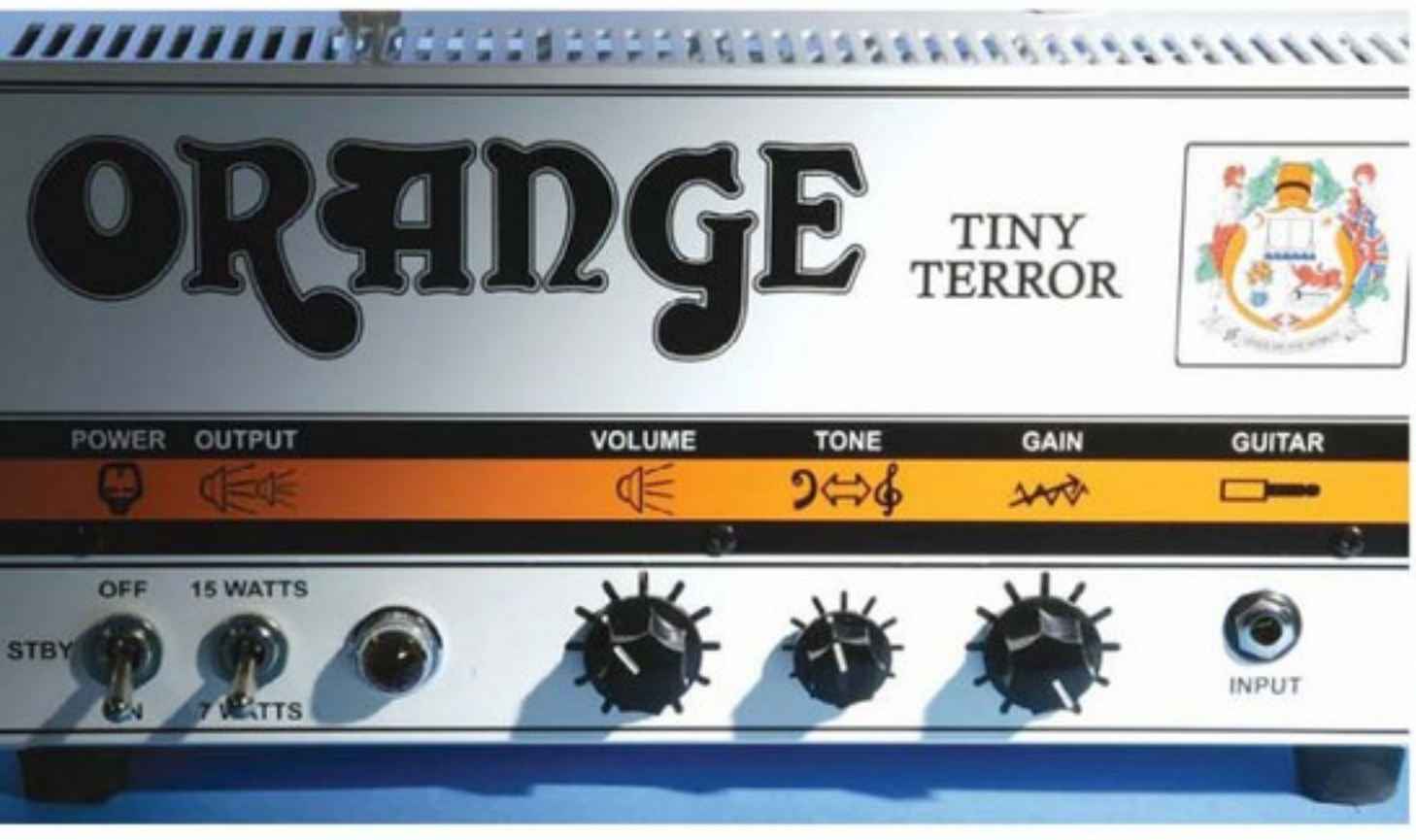
There will be more than one opinion on the clean sound, but probably a high level of agreement on the drive sound. Pushing the Gain (not more than 8/10) brings the amp into its element – recording-friendly crunchy overdrive. The middy clean tone fills out into a beautiful balance of low mids and smooth highs, and the reediness sometimes found with EL84 output stages is only produced at extreme Gain settings (to avoid it when metal tonality is wanted in the studio, it may be worth checking out one or two of the many pedals dedicated to the task). The Strat sings nicely on any pickup selection, and the Les Paul does a convincing fuzz-via-stuck-wah that can be tuned to taste on the guitar's tones and volume controls. If there's any issue here, it's the Tiny Terror's dominance of the overall sound, which makes these two guitars sound a bit similar. But that could be said of many high-end overdrive amps, which puts the Tiny Terror in good company.

The cab is a solid piece of kit, but it's big for the amp and the speaker may be too highly rated

Pushing the Gain knob brings the amp into its element – recording-friendly crunchy overdrive

The low-power option is, thankfully, fairly gentle in its overall effect; many such arrangements throw too much water on the fire. Here instead there's a small change in level with a bit more dirt. It's a useful thing to have, because pushing EL84s hard-to-get output-driven crunch can result in failures, particularly with cheap unmatched valves, and the lower supply voltage in 7W mode protects them from their self-harming tendencies without much sound penalty. A good idea, therefore, to use this as standard unless you really need big sound levels – the Tiny Terror might surprise you with what it can do in that area, too.

Lastly, the 1x12" cab is solidly made from 18mm ply, nicely finished, and up to anything the amp can throw at it. For us, there's a bonus in the tone department when the speaker's driven towards its saturation limit, which is usually around half of its rated power limit – the compression effect then causes the guitar and amp to interact. The 100W unit in this cab never gets near this, and the amp isn't fully represented by it, although it's decent enough and, of course, bombproof in this context. There's a smaller cab somewhere in the Orange range and it might be worth asking about comparing the two before committing to one or the other. As in all these matters, let your ears decide.



VERDICT

There are plenty of 15W valve amps out there, and many of them challenge the Tiny Terror in the clean-sound area. Where the Orange excels is in the crunch zone, where its range of sounds is wide, easily controlled, and musically satisfying. The format is novel, with a high cute factor, but this is also a fine-sounding and well-made unit that should be taken seriously as a recording and small-gig amp.

FINAL SCORE

Build Quality	16/20
Playability	12/20
Sound	16/20
Value for money	18/20
Vibe	18/20
TOTAL	**80%**

Good for... blues, blues rock, alt. country and indie at recording or small gig levels

Look elsewhere... trad country, soul, metal

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Deluxe Electro Acoustic Guitar +Amp Pack £109.95	Warwick Rockbass Corvette SE 4 Active .. £419.00	Boss RC-2 Loop Station Effect Pedal £149.00	Terratec Axon AX100 MkII GuitarMIDI Pack £459.00

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Price: £229

Johnson's Carolina Series 000s and dreadnoughts are aiming for an all-American vibe at a steal of a price. Jerry Uwins approves

Johnson

JO-16 & JD-27 Carolina Series

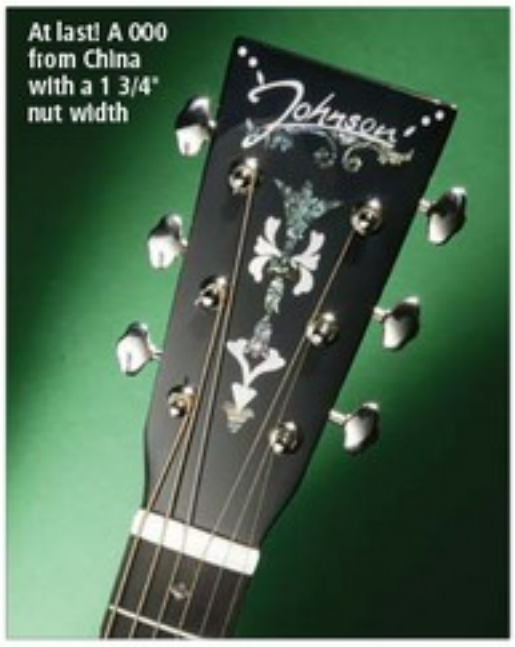
Johnson has become a major name in budget acoustics in the States since its inception in the early '90s. A couple of years ago, the company – a division of multi-brand US corporation The Music Link – hired luthiers Greg Rich and Scott Zimmerman to develop and upgrade the line, and one upshot is the Carolina Series… built, you've guessed it, in China. Rich and Zimmerman bring heavyweight experience with them, numbering collectively among their previous employers Gibson, Saga, Fender and Charvel/Jackson.

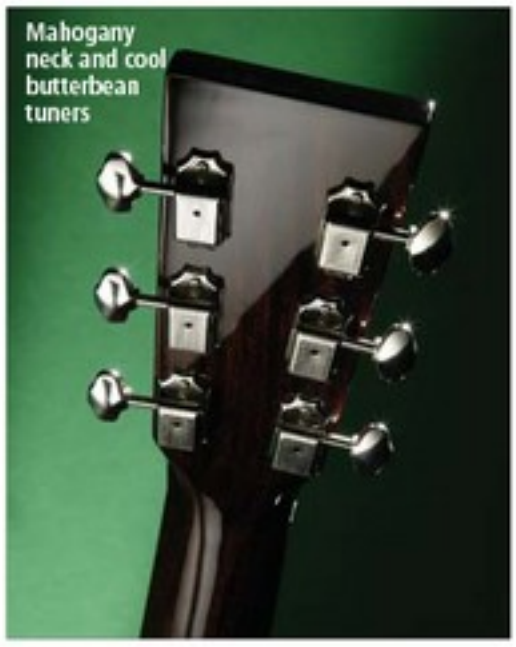
JO-16

The Carolinas are divided into Series I and II, the 000-size JO-16 being one of the former. The main difference is that Series Is have laminated back and sides, while Series IIs are all-solid. The 16 and 26 models are mahogany-backed, whereas the 17 and 27 are rosewood.

Styled along Martin lines, the JO-16 has aspects reminiscent of Blueridges, which is perhaps no coincidence given Rich's time with Blueridge owners Saga Music. The shell-inlaid spade peghead with its vintage butterbean-knob tuners is one indicator, the elegant, shallow ivoroid body binding another. These details also apply to our Series II JD-27 dread and also to the rest of the Carolina line-up.

The Carolina guitars gain more retro flavour from the abalone position markers, similar to early Martin Style 45, while under the solid Engelmann spruce top sits '30s-style forward X-bracing. The neck joint is a traditional dovetail, the nut and saddle bone, and the bridge and unbound fingerboard resemble ebony though they are in fact black-stained rosewood. The standard of detailing is excellent, and timber quality looks good too.





The JO-16's sound is a joy – open, clear and sustaining, with a zingy, almost autoharp-like attack

Most folk acoustics in the budget sector play safe with necks, keeping things slim and snug, presumably with younger players in mind. Not this

First Impressions

The fingerstyle-width neck is both unusual and welcome in these budget realms

FINAL SCORE

Build Quality	18/20
Playability	15/20
Sound	18/20
Value for money	19/20
Vibe	17/20
TOTAL	**87%**

Good for... melodic, shiny-toned, well-articulated sounds from a true fingerstyle set-up

Look elsewhere... if a wide, full neck is your idea of hell

FACTFILE

JO-16

Description: 000-size acoustic. Made in China

Price: £229

Build: Solid Engelmann spruce top, laminated mahogany back/sides. Mahogany neck, 20-fret rosewood fingerboard. Rosewood bridge, bone nut and saddle, vintage tuners

Options: JO-17 (£249) with rosewood back/sides. All-solid-wood versions are the mahogany JO-26 (£349) and rosewood JO-27 (£399)

Left-handers: Coming soon, no extra charge

Finish: Gloss natural, vintage sunburst or black

Scale length: 632mm (24.9")

Neck width:
Nut 44.5mm
12th fret 57mm

Depth of neck:
First fret 22mm
9th fret 24.5mm

String spacing:
Nut 38.5mm
Bridge 59.5mm

Action as supplied:
12th fret treble 2.0mm
12th fret bass 2.0mm

Max rim depth: 98mm

Max body width: 386mm

Fingerboard radius: 15"

Weight: 1.82kg/4.0lb

THE COMPETITION

ARIA AF35
Martin-esque folk with rosewood back/sides and simple Style 28 cosmetics
RRP: £229

BLUERIDGE BR43
A plain solid spruce/mahogany 000 with a small, shell-inlaid peghead
RRP: £269

TANGLEWOOD TW170AS
Solid spruce top and mahogany back, maple bindings and tasty Kluson-style vintage tuners
RRP: £199

Price: £399

THE COMPETITION

BLUERIDGE BR140D
This all-solid spruce/mahogany dread is an Historic, so a vivid amber top, dalmatian tortie pickguard and ornately inlaid peghead are part of the deal
RRP: £469

OZARK 3755
One of the new solid-wood Deluxe Series, this rosewood-back dread hides an active endpin system. Price includes case
RRP: £455

VINTAGE V1500N
All-solid spruce/rosewood spec at a bargain price, plus deluxe trim including maple/abalone top purfling and maple-bound fingerboard
RRP: £299

FACTFILE

JD-27

Description: Dreadnought acoustic. Made in China

Price: £399

Build: Solid Engelmann spruce top, solid rosewood back and sides. Mahogany neck with 20-fret rosewood fingerboard. Rosewood bridge, bone nut and saddle, vintage-style chrome tuners

Options: JD-26 (£349) with solid mahogany back and sides. Laminated versions are the mahogany JD-16 (£229) and rosewood JD-17 (£249). Cutaway and cutaway electro variants available on all dreadnought models, from £249 to £499

Left-handers: Coming soon, at no extra charge

Finish: Gloss natural, vintage sunburst or black

Scale length:
645mm (25.4")

Neck width:
Nut 43mm
12th fret 53mm

Depth of neck:
First fret 21.5mm
9th fret 25mm

String spacing:
Nut 36mm
Bridge 55mm

Action as supplied:
12th fret treble 2.0mm
12th fret bass 2.3mm

Max rim depth: 121mm

Max body width: 395mm

Fingerboard radius: 15"

Weight: 2.23kg/4.9lb

Contact: Westside
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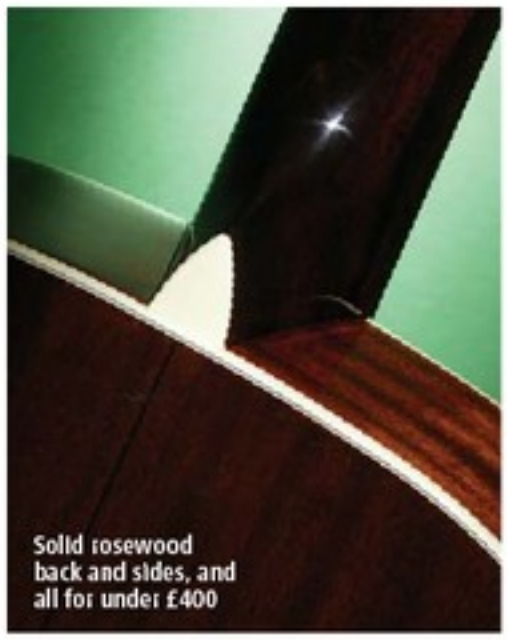
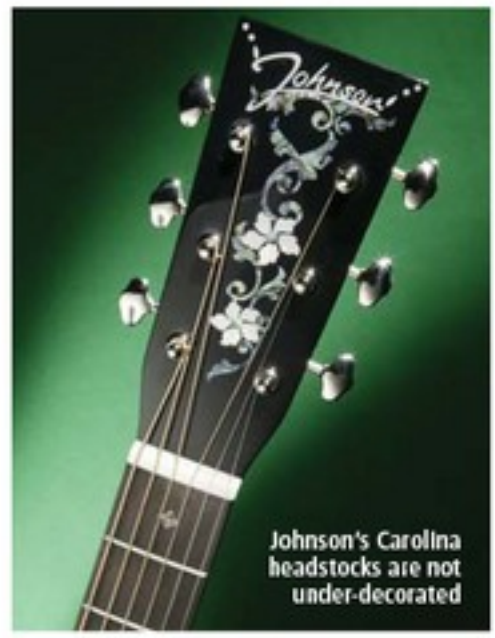

Solid rosewood back and sides, and all for under £400



Johnson's Carolina headstocks are not under-decorated

What the JD-27 lacks in richness it makes up for in vibrancy. It's an enjoyably zesty, punchy player

Johnson: its mahogany neck, save for the shorter 000-type 24.9" scale length, is fashioned to OM dimensions with a broad 44.5mm (1.75") span at the nut, a wide 57mm at the octave and a super-airy string spacing at the bridge of nearly 60mm. However, the quite deep neck profile gives a chunky feel at higher positions. I'd definitely favour losing some wood here.

SOUNDS

While the neck might not be a strummer's dream, the JO-16's sound is a joy. Open, clear and sustaining, it revels in a zingy, almost autoharp-like attack and has laudable dynamics and across-the-range punch considering its relatively shallow body. The tone sounds almost too lustrous with new strings, but give it a day or two and things settle in very nicely indeed.

JD-27

Cosmetically this top-range Carolina Series II dreadnought is largely identical to the JO-16, involving the same bindings and inlay materials and other bits and bobs, and all presented in similarly fine form. Minor variations are a diamond volute under the nut, a different shell design on the headstock and a subtle hint of amber tinting to the Engelmann top. It also comes with pre-war bracing – but the back and sides are impressively even-grained solid rosewood, and the neck, which is one-piece rather than the Series I scarf-jointed variety, is fashioned to a mainstream width of 43mm (1 11/16") at the nut, with a bridge string spacing of 55mm. The profile is just as deep as the 000's, even a shade fuller higher up, but it's shaped to a fairly distinct 'V' which eliminates a lot of wood along the shoulders, giving a comfortable, reasonably compact grip which even some among the anti-V brigade might find themselves liking.

First Impressions

Johnson's subtly vintage livery makes this all-solid dreadnought a handsome fella

SOUNDS

The JD-27 is a robust performer yet remains openly voiced. It responds well under the pick, with good depth and a nice snappy presence when driven hard. You might expect more enveloping warmth than there is considering the rosewood construction, but what it might lack a little in overall tonal richness it amply makes up for in vibrancy. It's an enjoyably zesty, punchy player.

VERDICT

The choice of good quality, value-led acoustics from the Far East, especially China, is getting better all the time, and these tastefully retro-influenced Johnson Carolinas rank among the best we've tried at these price levels. The JO-16 warrants special praise, not just for its sunny, responsive sound but because it fills an important gap – a proper fingerstyle instrument for those on a tight budget. It's a brave move for Johnson because the wide neck won't suit everyone, but this guitar is catering for a specific need and deserves applause for that alone.

FINAL SCORE	
Build Quality	18/20
Playability	16/20
Sound	16/20
Value for money	18/20
Vibe	15/20
TOTAL	**83%**

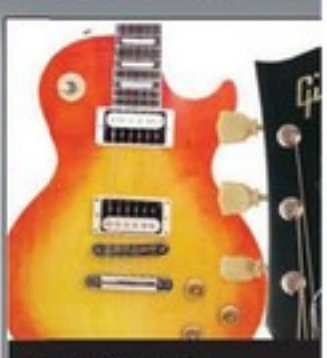
Good for... all-round dread satisfaction

Look elsewhere... if you just can't abide V-profile necks

gibson dove
rarely seen in this country. new.
£1999

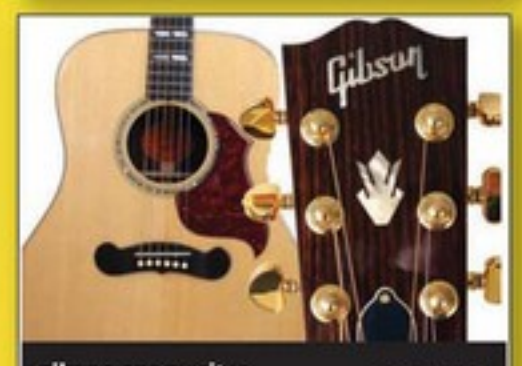
gibson j200
natural.
£1849

martin eric clapton
sunburst. very rare.
£1899



gibson les paul
standard. fade

martin dc28e
onboard electronics makes this a fabulous upgrade!
£1899



gibson songwriter
deluxe.
£1499

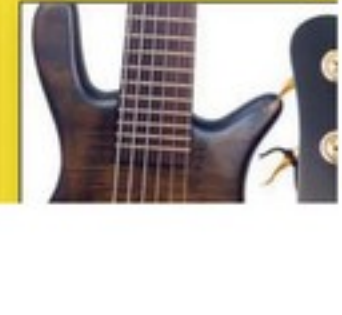
marleaux 6 string
£1999

patrick eggle evo legend 5
matched with AI grade Burr and quilted maple

gretsch white falcon
£1799

gretsch "Bono" irish falcon
needs to be seen. stunning.
£1799

patrick eggle RSG prototype
rather special example. see website for details
£1699

patrick eggle LA custom
21st century update the original eggle LA - awesome

Guitar
Takamine

Price: £1299

Ever since the '70s, Takamine has taken cues from Martin. Now, says Jerry Uwins, they're gunning for the real diehard flatpicking fans

Takamine

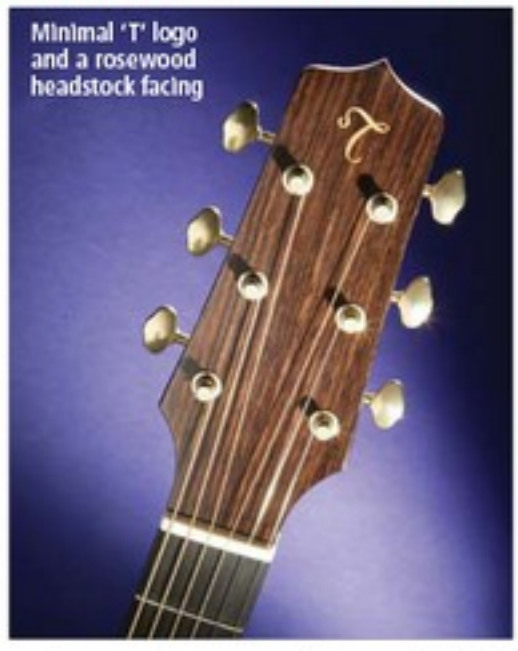
EF360SBG Bluegrass Dreadnought Electro

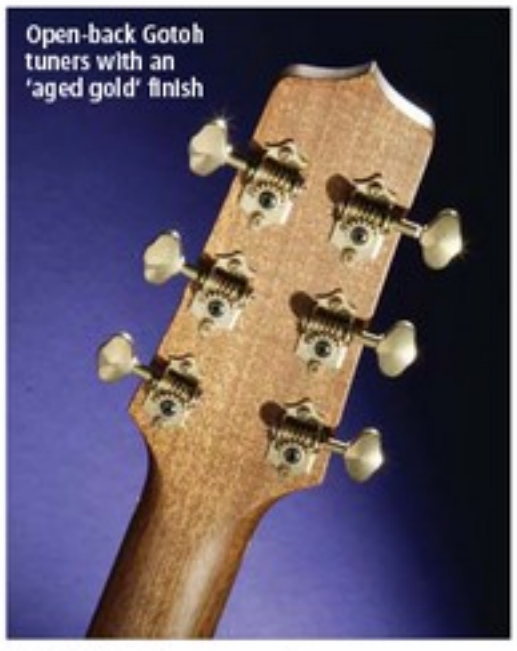
Let us first say that the title of this review may prove a mite confusing to overseas readers, because this guitar's name changes depending on where you live. The EF360SBG was launched at January's NAMM show as one of a new 'Bluegrass' series, but in America, and possibly other territories, this has now been changed to 'Flatpicker'. UK distributor Korg does not intend to follow suit, so 'Bluegrass' it remains as far as we in Blighty are concerned, which makes sense seeing as the 'BG' suffix will remain in the catalogue designation worldwide.

The all-solid spruce/rosewood EF360SBG is one of two Bluegrasses available over here, the other being a TF variant fitted with a CoolTube preamp as opposed to our EF's straight-out active preamp system. Takamine simultaneously released two similarly powered, mahogany-backed '340' versions but for reasons of keeping things simple, Korg UK isn't going to carry them.

First Impressions

Stunning build and sound, but that chunky neck is a daunting handful


Minimal 'T' logo and a rosewood headstock facing


Open-back Gotoh tuners with an 'aged gold' finish

The Takamine EF360SBG evokes a traditional, good ol' boy picker vibe via the neck. It's a whopper

What marks out a bluegrass-inclined instrument varies. For some makers – like Larrivée with its D50 – it's a larger-than-normal Clarence White-style soundhole. This is not Takamine's approach: soundhole diameter is a regular 100mm or so. Instead, the company evokes a traditional, good ol' boy picker vibe via the EF's neck. There's no gentler way to say this: it's a whopper. The span at the nut is 45mm, and the profile exceeds a daunting 27mm depth before curving towards the heel turn. Action as standard is also set relatively high, though ample break angle over the bridge's split saddles will allow this to be brought down to taste.

A huge neck like this might deter a lot of potential buyers, and being relatively small-handed I certainly couldn't live with it long-term; above the 7th fret is pretty much a no-go area for me, aside from the occasional gingerly snatched run. However, this 'heritage' feel has been created on purpose; the guitar was designed in cahoots with various hotshot US bluegrass players, and the vibe is

FACTFILE

EF360SBG

Description: Dreadnought electro-acoustic. Made in Japan

Price: £1299 inc. case

Build: Solid spruce top, solid rosewood back and sides. Mahogany neck with 20-fret bound ebony fingerboard. Rosewood bridge, open-geared antique gold tuners, two strap buttons. Under-saddle pickup, TLD Line Driver active direct-out system

Options: TF360SBG at £1399, with identical construction but with CoolTube preamp

Left-handers: No

Finish: Gloss natural body, satin neck

Scale length:
644mm (25.35")

Neck width:
Nut 45mm
12th fret 54mm

Depth of neck:
First fret 23mm
9th fret 27mm

String spacing:
Nut 38mm
Bridge 55mm

Action as supplied:
12th fret treble 2.4mm
12th fret bass 3.0mm

Max rim depth: 125mm

Max body width: 400mm

Fingerboard radius:
Approximately 15"

Weight: 2.54kg/5.6lb

Contact:
Korg UK ☎ 01908 857100

Web: www.takamine.co.uk

THE COMPETITION

GUILD GAD50E
Tempting price for this famous-name all-solid spruce/rosewood dread, with wood bindings and a straight-out Fishman Matrix 1 endpin system
RRP: £669

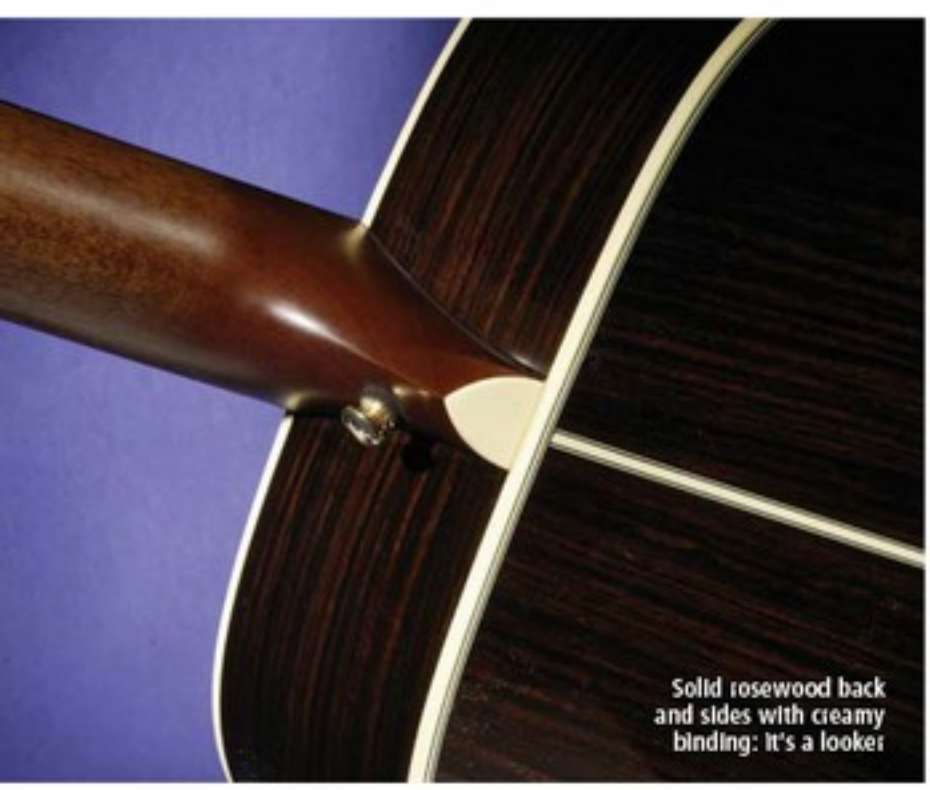
AVALON GOLD SERIES D200E
Solid spruce/rosewood again, with rosewood bindings and a 44mm semi-wide neck. Price includes a Fishman Prefix Pro system
RRP: £1329

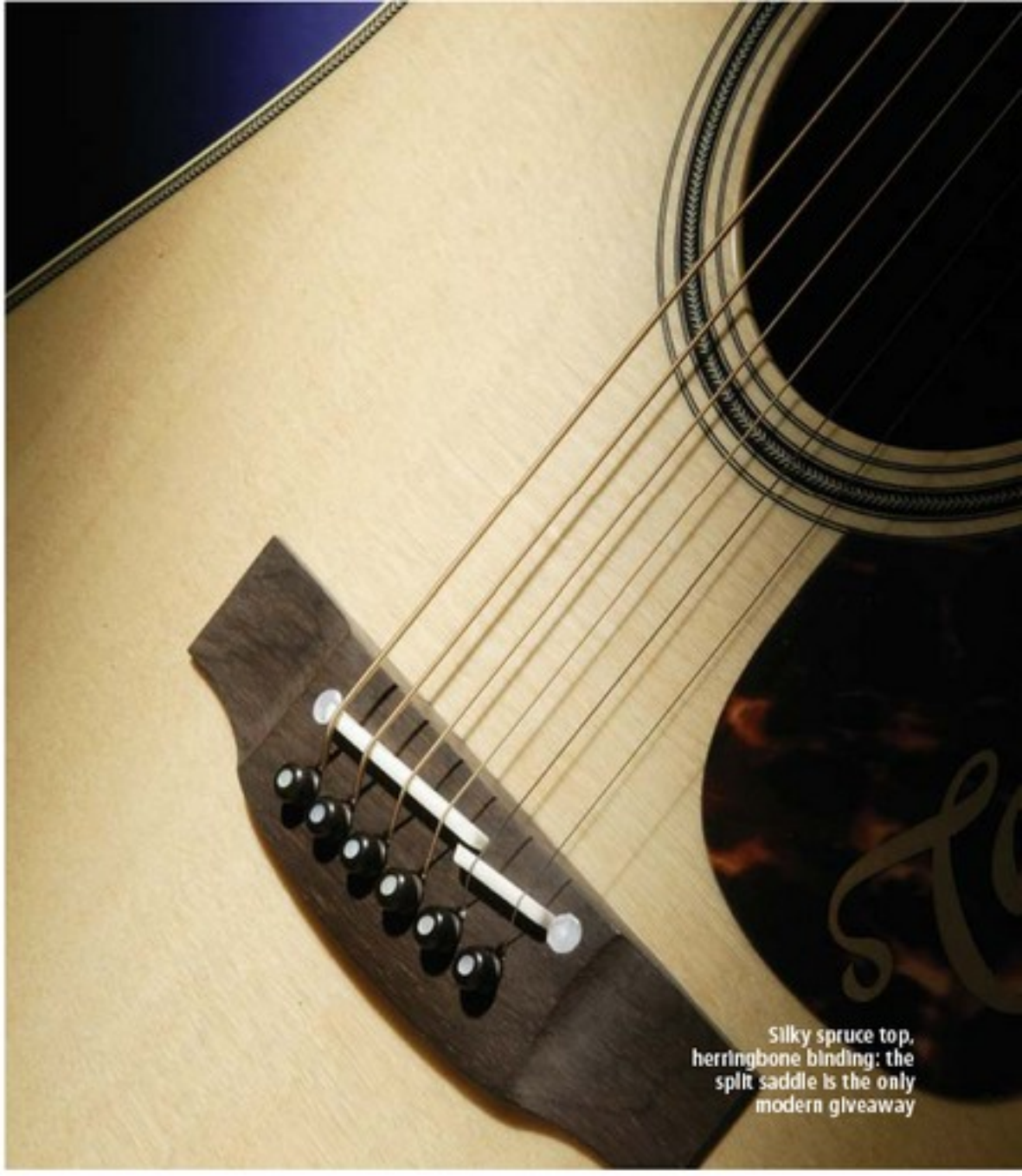
LARRIVEE D50
Dubbed the 'Bluegrass' for its enlarged soundhole, the all-solid spruce/mahogany D50 includes flame-maple bindings and vintage open-back tuners. Price allows for a Baggs Element active endpin system
RRP: £1919

rather reminiscent of old club-necked, high-action Martins where you have to fight the guitar to tame it and bring out its best. This reflects what seems a peculiarly American trait, a positive liking for having to really get stuck in. That spells masochism in my book, but there we are.

There's nothing torturous about the guitar fit and finish, though. Build quality and detailing are really quite superb, highlighting the general excellence of what's coming out of Takamine's new Japanese factory. Vintage touches include the discreet 'T' logo on the peghead, a very nice set of aged-gold, open-back Gotoh tuners, herringbone purfling and rosette and a dark tortie pickguard. Body binding and the back's centre strip are tastefully done in ivory plastic with black multi-plies around the back, and the spruce and rosewood look suitably upmarket, the latter being especially straight and even-grained. The gloss body is buffed to an immaculate showroom lustre, while both the satin one-piece mahogany neck and bound ebony fingerboard feel silky smooth to the touch. A second strap button at the heel is a welcome nod to modern-day performance requirements.

Unlike most straight-out active electro systems where the preamp is incorporated in the endpin, Takamine's TLD Line Driver preamp is mounted on the neckblock, including a velcro-secured holder for the 9V battery. The company says that the circuitry provides sufficient current boost to allow the use of a long cable between guitar and amp or desk, without any signal loss. There's no onboard control over EQ, of course, but a mild 'smile' curve has been designed in, leaving the mids flat while the bass is boosted by 4dB, the treble by 2dB. Initially, I thought this was the first time that Takamine has fitted a straight-out system to any of its instruments, but was reminded that a TLD was first used a year or so back on the OM-bodied EF75S Jacaranda limited edition. The reason is common to both guitars – to offer customers the option of an electro that hasn't had a hole hacked in the side for a preamp.


Solid rosewood back and sides with creamy binding: it's a looker


Silky spruce top, herringbone binding: the split saddle is the only modern giveaway

This guitar is a veritable belter, with an explosive sound and a firm bass plus Takamine's sweetness and zing

SOUNDS

With the mass of the hefty neck almost certainly contributing to the guitar's vibrational properties, the EF360SBG is a veritable belter. It has a quite explosive sound when played hard – as it often will be in a bluegrass flatpicking context – and there's a real firm thrum to the bass end providing a rock-solid foundation for the typical Takaminean tonal sweetness and zing in the mids and high end. It really is a great dreadnought sound, one that cuts through in spades yet retains an excellent sense of poise and openness.

The gainy TLD system does it one-hundred per cent justice, providing a virtual facsimile of the guitar's acoustic signature, sympathetically rather than artificially enhanced by the subtle preset EQ. Inter-string output balance on our sample is spot-on too, helping make powered pickings a joy to hear.

VERDICT

This guitar's huge neck makes me wish that Takamine would offer a not-quite-so-bluegrass option with a shallower, more accessible profile – but that might undermine the whole point of the instrument and, quite possibly, adversely affect its superb sound as well. The EF360SBG does, after all, fall within a 'speciality' category, and that's just what it caters for – those players who accept (and indeed, relish) that such handling goes with this kind of flatpicking territory. For them, this Takamine represents a seriously good proposition, even if the rest of us will be looking elsewhere.

FINAL SCORE

Build Quality	20/20
Playability	13/20
Sound	20/20
Value for money	18/20
Vibe	15/20
TOTAL	**86%**

Good for... yee-hah hoedowns courtesy of equally strong acoustic and powered sounds

Look elsewhere... if fat necks are about as welcome to you as a fat lip

HEAD-WAY

ACOUSTIC AMPS

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Price: £1069

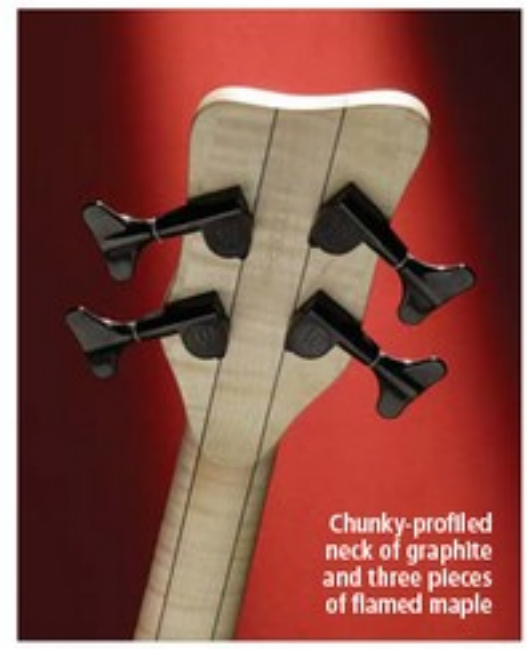
Buoyed by the success of the Corvette $$, Warwick gives the Streamer the double-humbucker treatment. Gareth Morgan is back in black

Warwick

Streamer $$ Bass

Hans-Peter Wilfer established Warwick in 1982, following in the footsteps of his father Alfred Wilfer, founder of the Framus musical instrument company. Models like the Thumb, Streamer and Corvette have proved popular throughout the world, and this month we've laid our hands on one of the most recent additions to the range, the Streamer $$ (aka the Double Buck).

While you may raise an eyebrow at Warwick's choice of name, you can't argue with the excellent standard of construction. You may also be surprised at just how well-balanced this bass is on your lap. A rather gorgeous Nirvana Black oil-impregnated open-grained finish and matching black hardware gives the $$ a moody, modern look; the down-sized swamp ash body – essentially the same as a Streamer – is slightly offset, Jazz Bass style, and comes with a convex front profile in tandem with a ribcage chamfer. There's a stubby lower horn that gives easy access to all but the highest two frets, and an unusual upper horn with a bulge near the tip giving it an almost cartoon-esque quality. If you look at the rear you'll find that rather than siting the battery for the active bass under the main electronics housing, Warwick has installed a cover of the no-screws, quick-release variety.



A gorgeous Nirvana Black open-grained finish and black hardware gives the $$ a moody, modern look

The 34" scale, bolt-on neck is made from three pieces of maple separated by thin graphite strips, and playing-wise it's a pretty chunky-feeling affair. Important news: Warwick tell us that all their bolt-on basses will also soon come in 30" – four-string only – plus 32", 34" and 35" scale versions. There's a volute behind the nut, and beyond that lies the familiar back-angled Warwick headstock, the design of which always reminds me of a three-year-old's attempt at drawing a square. The headstock carries four black-chromed Warwick tuners laid out in a 'sloping' fashion to bring them closer to the player, and a black graphite nut held in place by two screws. The trussrod cover also includes a natty pop-up easy-access window allowing you to adjust the trussrod without removing the cover itself.

Wenge is the wood of choice for the fingerboard, which is dot-free, though handy references are provided along the top edge. The 24 jumbo frets are made from a silver/bronze alloy similar to that used in bell making which

First Impressions

Mean, moody and modern with more of a feeling of substance than the down-sized body suggests

FACTFILE

WARWICK STREAMER

Description: Solidbody bass. Made in Germany

Price: £1069

Build: Two-piece Swamp Ash body, three-piece maple neck with 24 jumbo silver/bronze frets on a wenge fingerboard. Warwick two-piece bridge and Warwick tuners. Black hardware

Electrics: Active with two MEC MM-style humbuckers. Volume (pull for passive mode), Balance, Bass and Treble controls. Two coil switches for series, parallel or single coil pickup modes

Left hander: Yes, same finishes and prices

Finishes: Various coloured oil and high-polish stains, plus natural in oil or high polish from £959 to £1149

Range Options: 5-string, same finishes, £1059-£1249. Fretless versions available with same finishes and prices

Scale length:
864 (34")

Width of neck:
Nut 39mm
12th fret 54mm

Depth of neck
First fret 20mm
12th fret 25mm

String spacing
Nut 10.5mm
Bridge 20mm

Action as supplied
12th fret treble 2mm
12th fret bass 3mm

Weight: 4.2/9lbs 3oz

Contact:
Warwick UK ☎ 0161 839 0666

Web:
www.warwickbass.com

THE COMPETITION

SANDBERG
Bullett JM
In the tone, price, sound and feel categories, this is a hand-built winner
RRP: £899

G&L
L-2000
Plenty of high-quality, versatile sounds, but maybe a fraction too expensive
RRP: £1405

LAKLAND
Skyline 44-02
Practical, versatile, classy and simply superb
RRP: £1149

Warwick reckon transmits more of your tone into the neck. Down at the bottom is Warwick's two-piece bridge, with one adjustable section and another acting as a stop tailpiece. Both are recessed into the body for total immovability and the best possible transference of vibration.

When it comes to pickups, Warwick has plumped for MEC units. The $$ comes loaded with a pair of massive humbucking MM-style units with super-meaty polepieces, and they're linked to active MEC electronics with Volume, Balance and a two-band EQ. Pulling up the Volume control bypasses the active circuit and puts the whole bass into passive mode, and the two remaining switches can be used to select one of three modes for each pickup either individually or in unison: series (switch up), parallel (down) or single coil (middle).

SOUNDS

Let's start with those three switches. Parallel mode (let's call it P for short) is fat and clean with a low-mid bias; the single coil settings (SC) are thinner with a honky high-mid leaning, and putting the pickups in series (S) gives a quality similar to parallel but at a lower output level. Boosting Bass EQ in SC mode evens out the mid response and increases the versatility of this setting nicely. Do the same to the punchier P setting and you'll get a loud, forceful sound with an aggressive edge and plenty of colour; add extra Treble here to get close to the Musicman sound, with fizzing highs. Boosting EQ in S mode is very similar but with less output level and power, while the treble-lifted SC setting is all about high-mid clarity without excessive honk. Various other subtle variations are obtainable via the six other switching combinations.

The pickup spacing is unusual, but while adaptability may suffer, it sounds great

The Streamer $$ is for any player who straddles numerous genres and needs a bass that delivers the goods

There's good tonal sustenance to be had from isolating the neck pickup: P mode gives an earthy growl with powerful, punchy mids and plenty of cut; the S setting is similar but with less output; and the SC version is tonally even but has more note detail with just a hint of added snarl.

Adding Bass EQ to the neck/P combination is the smoothest, densest variation, but the slight low-mid bias retains definition and ensures the higher strings are smooth – it's a splendid, slightly retro rock'n'roll tone. Care is required with Treble EQ as too much injures the $$'s cultured, sophisticated core, inducing a slicing, brittle edge… great for attacking slap bass, but not much else.

Boosting bass EQ in neck/SC mode gives this smoothest option more substance but reduces the subtle bark from an element to a nuance. A small increase in Treble pushes this versatile sound that all-important fraction higher in the mix.

Because the $$'s bridge pickup is sited a little further away from the bridge than is considered normal, soloing it in P mode is refreshingly un-nasal and adding Bass EQ yields fat, funky, well-defined sounds with smooth highs. You can edge the Treble EQ up a fair way before fret noise gets involved, and subtle increases add a pleasing spike. The neck/SC offering is fairly hollow but increasing the Bass EQ turns the insipid into the practical, and a dollop of added top makes it just crisp enough to remind you which pickup you're on. This is all fun, if a little generic – but have we mentioned the absolutely unbelievable sustain?

VERDICT

Many Warwick basses have a distinct high-mid bias, but that's not the case here. The $$ has plenty of practical, easily accessible, high quality tonal variations. This is a bass for any player who straddles numerous genres and needs an instrument that delivers the goods. Because it's sensibly priced, the only question you have to ask is 'do I like the way it looks?' If the answer is 'yes', we think the Streamer $$ is a very fine-sounding Warwick.

FINAL SCORE

Build Quality	19/20
Playability	16/20
Sound	15/20
Value for money	16/20
Vibe	15/20
TOTAL	**81%**

Good for... solid grooving duties in a wide variety of styles

Look elsewhere... for pure retro looks and tones or more extreme tonal variation

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6. CONSTRUCTING BLUES SOLOS
Received an excellent review (Issue 1, Total Guitar). This video will teach you how to construct your own solos, you will even be able to play over advanced blues chord progressions.

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Detailed course (70 runs shown), runs are taken from all styles - Rock - Jazz - Blues - Country. Essential for all guitarists.

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Price: £199

For under 200 smackers, Peavey's 1x15" budget bass combo looks like a bargain. But is just 50W of welly enough? Gareth Morgan finds out

Peavey

MAX 115 50W Combo

Peavey has a reputation as the value-for-money king, and at this extra-low price the MAX 115 was never going to be a lightweight plywood jobs with Neodymium speakers – but it's a little disappointing that this 50W amp with its Custom 15" speaker in a 20mm chipboard coffin weighs such a hefty 26.2kgs (58lbs). Still, it's ruggedly finished in black vinyl with reasonable corner protection and a solid, steel grille. Two HyperVent porting outlets guard each bottom corner.

The 115 offers a three-band EQ (Low, Mid, High) with sweepable midrange (Shift), a Gain control and three filters to shape the overall sound. Max, Modern and Vintage are their names, with Vintage utilising Peavey's TransTube emulation circuitry for a serious retro vibe. Add to this an FX loop (with Send doubling as CD Input) and an input gain limiter (Peavey's DDT speaker protection circuitry) and there's a reasonable amount to look forward to when you get your breath back from lugging the thing around.

SOUNDS

With EQ set flat, each Voicing option provides a slightly different starting point: Max is fairly true to your bass' acoustic sound, Modern is cleaner and tighter, and Vintage has a noticeable growl at the bass end combined with fatter, smoother highs. Substantially boosting Low has the requisite fixture-rattling effect on any setting and while enough definition remains, Modern is unsurprisingly the punchiest. Talking of punch, there's plenty of burpy attack available from increases in Mid level on the anti-clockwise side of the Shift control (200Hz-1kHz) with the extra natural width and onboard growl of Vintage resulting in a pleasing marriage of power and silk. On the clockwise side of Mid Shift (1-2kHz), boosts in Modern mode produce the most aggressively crisp noise with an edginess that contributes nicely to your attack while Max scores highly in the cut and width stakes. The high level of EQ boost available continues with High, and on both Max or Modern you'll need to take care with how much you dial in, as excessive hikes quickly clutter your sound with unwanted fret noise. Vintage is entirely different: even on full boost the effect is more in the way of added punch and body, with no audible spikiness.

First Impressions

Nice simple controls and welcome 21st century design. Pretty heavy for a 50W unit, though

VERDICT

There are plenty of good sounds in the MAX 115, and each filter setting produces usable alternatives with each tweak of the EQ. It's well put together and visually appealing, but 27kg is too heavy for only 50W of power. Still, if you intend to use it solely in one location, that's not a problem.

FINAL SCORE

Build Quality	18
Versatility	12
Sound	15
Value for money	15
Vibe	15
TOTAL	**75%**

Good for... a budget meat-and-potatoes combo for home use or low-level rehearsals

Look elsewhere... for more portability, power and tonal variety, but you'll pay much more

FACTFILE

MAX 115

Description: Single channel, 50W 1x15" transistor-powered combo. Custom 15" speaker in a 20mm-thick chipboard cabinet with front porting. Made in China

Price: £199

Controls: Gain, Low, Mid cut/boost, Mid (frequency) Shift, High and Master controls, Max/Modern/Vintage voicing switch. Internal DDT (limiter) circuit; Input, FX Loop and Headphone Out jack sockets

Range Options: Four models (MAX 126, 158, 110, and 112) from 10W to 35W, priced £49 to £149

Contact:
Peavey Electronics Ltd
☎ 01536 461 234

Web: www.peavey.com

THE COMPETITION

GALLIEN-KRUEGER Backline 115 125W
Surprisingly high quality sounds from this USA-made belter
RRP: £363

CARLSBRO Bass Bomber 125W
Sturdy, dependable and versatile combo
RRP: £329.99

FENDER Rumble 100/210 100W
Another substantial unit with a more contemporary slant, offering decent versatility
RRP: £299.99

VOX TONELAB SE
Price: £399
Good for: vintage-style sounds
Look elsewhere: for full-on metal or more modern music types
Contact: most guitar shops
Web: www.voxamps.co.uk

LINE 6 POD XT LIVE
Price: £363
Good for: creating your own sounds and playing live
Look elsewhere: for simplicity
Contact: Line 6 ☎ 01327 302700
Web: www.line6.co.uk

World At Your Feet

With finer sounds and better adaptability than ever before, it's time we took all-in-one effects units seriously again. Martyn Casserly looks for the one that does it all

Guitarists love effects pedals. If you have any doubts, just look at the incredible range and styles that are on offer today. There are drawbacks, though. Not many of us can afford to splash £200 for a boutique item that we'll only use for one song, or if your current pedalboard is growing out of control then you might appear to be re-enacting *Riverdance* every time you change sounds at a gig. What if one affordable, simple-to-operate unit could do it all? It might seem too good to be true – so let's find out.

Zoom has long been the supporter of impoverished musicians who love experimenting with sounds. In fact, I first took to the stage with a GFX707 at my feet, and that little box of tricks proved a trusty companion. The **Zoom G1-X** (£64.99) is the company's latest entry-level unit, and should prove a great starting point for those wanting a simple and fun multi-effects package.

It's very light and small – just a little bigger than a VHS box – and runs quite happily on batteries as well as mains. The layout is just two main foot buttons for moving through the sounds and an expression pedal, with a small collection of buttons to control editing (and the built-in drum machine). Sounds are surprisingly good... in fact, some are excellent. As you cycle through the options you just keep stopping to play around with most of the tones. There are some great distortion models, bluesy crunches, '80s chorus-drenched cleans, pitchbends, wahs, and plenty more. Obviously a unit this size has its limitations; the controls can be fiddly, moving between two sounds can mean frantic clicking with your foot, and sound levels are a bit varied – but as a totally inspiring practice tool, this is first class. Riffs are easy to write and the whole package just makes you want to keep on playing. Excellent... and cheap, too.

Korg's Toneworks series have always been popular desktop modellers, and the **Korg AX1500G** (£169) uses the patented REMS system to create its wide range of sounds. Amp models move from tweed types up to

BOSS ME-50
Price: £179
Good for: highly usable classic Boss tones
Look elsewhere: for an all-in-one package
Contact: Roland UK Ltd ☎ 01792 702701
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KORG TONEWORKS AX1500G
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Good for: Phrase training and sonic experimentation
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Web: www.korg.co.uk

DIGITECH RP350
Price: £179
Good for: using with computers
Look elsewhere: for more inspiring sounds
Contact: Sound Technology ☎ 01462 480000
Web: www.digitech.com

ZOOM G1-X
Price: £64.99
Good for: home practising and just plain fun
Look elsewhere: for live use
Contact: Exclusive Distribution Ltd ☎ 01462 481148
Web: www.zoom.co.jp

hi-gain stacks with the ability to select the kind of cab you'd like. The use of pedal emulation is a little limiting with the OD/Dist types being grouped with the Amp section instead of on its own, but there's an A/B switch that would enable you to set up two sounds that could act as lead and rhythm channels. Neat features include a Phrase trainer with an eight-second memory (or 16 if you lower the sound quality), with a CD input and the ability to slow down the phrase without changing its key. It also includes a useful metronome.

As a live stage unit, the Korg doesn't really cut the mustard. You need to bend down to activate the tuner, and overall the sounds are not as 'real' as some others in the test. But as a practice tool it's brilliant, with loads of odd and inspiring sounds, plenty of options and a real ease of use. Satriani takes one on tour for this very purpose, and he knows a thing or two.

The **Boss ME-50** (£179) is a good attempt at replicating a live pedalboard. There are three main footswitches (OD/Distortion, Modulation, and Delay) plus an expression pedal for wah and whammy duties and so forth. The menu system is simple: each option has its own dial, so you simply turn it to whatever effect you want, adjust the EQ, and you're done. This works well in Manual mode but it can get a little confusing when you program any patches in, as the settings are obviously stored in the memory but you have no physical representation of what you've done.

Sounds are very impressive and the unit has a real vibe about it. Basically everything is usable straight away, and it certainly ➲

> Not many can afford £200 for one boutique pedal. What if one affordable, simple to operate unit could do it all?

can be inspiring when you start to mix the effects together. When you realise the Boss also has a compressor, noisegate, reverb, tone-modifying circuit and tuner, you'll realise you're onto a winner. The only real downsides are the fact that to make it truly usable on stage you need to buy a few external switches to select features like the compressor and move between banks. You'll also need to shell out for a power supply, which I think is a bit cheap of Boss. This, and a slight delay when switching between banks, makes the ME-50 more like a studio and writing tool than a real live solution.

Digitech is another noted pedal manufacturer who has recently been concentrating on its line of excellent 'artist inspired' pedals such as the Jimi Hendrix and Brian May models. They're no stranger to multi-effects, though, and have been there since the start. The **Digitech RP350** (£179) is the big brother of the RP150 and the RP250 and benefits from a four-band rather than three-band EQ and a number of extra effects, amp and cab models. There's also a foot controller so you can get down and personal with plenty of your sounds.

The RP350 offers an extremely comprehensive collection of sounds that covers the usual range of overdrives, chorus, phaser, flanger, tremolo and wah. The sounds have a workhorse-like character – all very useable, but in the context of this group the tonal options all seem a bit too digital to my ears. However, the useful added extras may make this a winner, depending on your needs. There's a drum machine for practice, and the unit also connects to PC/Mac via a USB port, allowing it to be used with recording packages and to download new tones from the Digitech website. You can also record a 10-second piece of music into the unit and play it back at varying speeds to learn fast riffs and solos easier. It's extremely rugged, versatile, really simple to use, with great practice features, and the price is right – so this is a good unit for the player who's just starting out, or the more experience muso on a budget. For me it lacks a certain magic, but taste's a personal thing and enough people dig this unit to suggest it's worthy of consideration, so definitely give one a try.

Over the past few years Line 6 has built up an excellent reputation, and its dedicated effects units regularly appear on the pedalboards of bands like Radiohead, U2 and Metallica. In the **Line 6 Pod XT Live** (£363) they've taken the standard studio Pod XT and fitted it into a rugged stage-workable chassis with controls designed to work primarily in the live environment.

Alongside the standard four preset switches and bank selectors there are also footswitches for Amp, Stomp, Mod, Delay, and an expression pedal. The idea here is that once you've programmed a basic sound you have the option of switching in an overdrive pedal, modulation or any number of other things, just as with a normal collection of pedals. The Amp switch also allows you to bypass the amp emulation, which means you don't have to give up your favourite amp tones in order to use the unit.

The sounds are all very usable, although the presets take a bit of fine-tuning to match them to your amp. You do lose a little bit of warmth with the amp emulations, but overall the scope of invention that the unit provides far outweighs the negatives. The Pod XT Live offers a really expansive palette that encourages you try new things.

The **Vox Valvetronix Tonelab SE** (£399) is a monster. With an all-metal chassis – no plastic here – it's the biggest and heaviest on test, and one end is heavily laden with two expression pedals that are very similar to the standard Vox wahs. The layout is similar in style to the Boss ME-50, using dials for each effect and amp type, but the Vox also benefits from an LCD display that tells you the various parameters you're adjusting. Inside are some rather clever electrics that include a mini triode 12AX7 valve acting as a power amp, with a virtual output transformer and a circuit that simulates the varying impedance of a real speaker.

> The Pod XT Live is the most versatile gig pedal. There's a sense that anything is possible with it

The upshot: a good collection of quite organic sounds. Alongside the AC30s and AC15s are Tweeds, UK Blues, Rectos and various other recognisable amp types. The more 'vintage' sounds are certainly the best, and when married up with some of the classic effects you can emulate great tones of the '60s and '70s. Two expression pedals is also an advantage, allowing you a bit more variation within a song. Normally the far right one defaults to volume duties, but they're both assignable – although unless you have very dexterous feet you can still only use one at a time.

The programming can be a little confusing at times, but once you learn your way around there are some nice features, including the ability to set up A/B channels with a dedicated switch like on a real twin-channel amp (one for overdrive, one for lead, say). Gig-proof construction, simple layout and a padded gigbag all make this a very enticing product if you're into more vintage tones, though metalheads and Muse fans may want to look elsewhere.

The Best

THE BEST OVERALL!

Multi-effects units are both convenient and tremendous fun. The Zoom G1-X is the pick of the bunch for practising: simple and inspiring, with great sounds. The Korg lacks its charm, but it's very good, with some nice features. The Digitech RP350 boasts solid, impressive tones and the price is fair, while for home studio work the Boss ME-50 offers lots of useable, quickly-adjustable sounds. It's not quite ready for the road, but as a creative tool it's top class.

The best options for live work are the Pod XT Live and the Vox Tonelab. The Vox scores heavily on the vintage side of things, with good authentic replicas of sounds we all know and love, plus the added bonus of two expression pedals. It really is an excellent pedal – but in the end the amazing potential of the Pod XT Live wins it the top spot.

BEST FOR SONGWRITING

Although some of the presets aren't much cop, there's a sense that anything is possible with it. The sounds can be tweaked to amazing degrees, and the option of switching out anything on-the-fly makes it the most versatile gigging pedal. It's not simple, but if you're willing to put in the hours and make it the cornerstone of your rig then you'll be rewarded by pretty much any sound you want to make.

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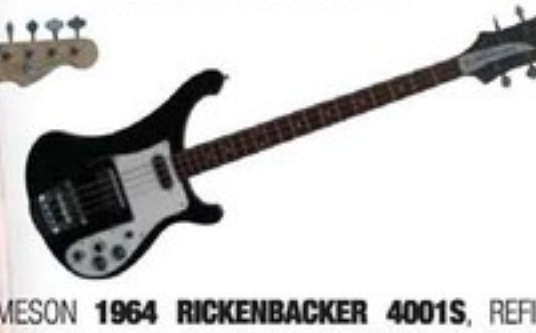

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Fake58 supplies old-style parts for vintage guitars, both new and aged. We go cap in hand

Fake58
Capacitors

In our article about restoring a 1960 Stratocaster we mentioned that original 1950s capacitors were probably unobtainable. We should have known better, because they're available from a UK company called Fake58.

These are painstaking reproductions of the Cornell-Dubilier tone capacitors used by Fender during the 1950s and early 1960s. They're properly tested NOS paper/oil caps that are wrapped in the original style printed paper and then covered in wax. These are available as a set of two caps for Telecasters, or individually for Stratocasters and Fender-style basses.

Some people have suggested that ceramic capacitors in Strats made after 1963 make them sound darker than the earlier paper/oil models. We rigged up a two-way switch to test this theory using the Fake58 in a 1963 Strat, and we could hear no difference whatsoever. Which, when you think about it, is a good thing.

However we did hear a big change when we replaced the genuine early 1950s Industrial Condenser Corp .05mF cap in a Dearnaley Taff Delta with Fake58's ZSW equivalent. Throughout the range of the tone control the sound was clearer and the treble roll-off was more even.

VERDICT

These reproduction capacitors look incredibly convincing. The ZSW in particular genuinely seemed 50 years old. So if you are building a instrument, or you are restoring a vintage piece and you want vintage-correct looks, these Fake58 caps look and sound the part. Okay, you could get something electronically equivalent for a few pence from Maplins – but the devil is in the detail.

FINAL SCORE	
Build Quality	20/20
Versatility	20/20
Sound	20/20
Value for money	15/20
Vibe	20/20
TOTAL	**95%**

Good for... replacements in vintage originals, or for home-relics with a super-authentic vibe

Look elsewhere... If you're seeking function over looks, and want to save money

Contact: Fake 58 ☎ 0118 975 1657
Web: www.fake58.co.uk

So new it's still in nappies, this is Marshall's latest 30W 1x10" living-room bass blaster

Marshall
MB30 Bass Combo

The MB30 is part of a new line of Marshall bass amps and falls squarely into the practice combo bracket, although it weighs 13.6kg/30lbs, which is poor return for only 30W. The steel grille with a classic logo adds a touch of class and hides a 10" MG driver. The control panel has neat, white-capped plastic controls. A selector toggles between two channels: Modern, with a Compression switch and Level control, and Vintage, where Gain and Volume give varying degrees of retro growl. Alongside Bass and Treble, a three-position Voice Shift offers 'valve' sounds (1), punchy low mid/scooped high-mids (2) and scooped mids (3), a Voice control boosting the response of each. Add CD In, FX loop, Phones Out and Line Out sockets, and there's plenty to play with.

SOUNDS

Moving from 1 to 3 on the Voice Shift ignites brighter sounds, and boosting Voice adds extra spite. Care is required with Classic's Gain control... in fact don't use it unless you need distortion, but zero Gain uncovers warm width and organic growl or full-range clarity if Modern is selected. The EQ is practical: maxing Bass provides width without overload and the extra spike from boosting Treble is pleasantly unpleasant. The only real downer is the compression with the Modern setting, which is just a little too enthusiastic.

VERDICT

Not bad at all, and excellent value for a practicing/home recording combo.

FINAL SCORE	
Build Quality	17/20
Playability	15/20
Sound	15/20
Value for money	17/20
Vibe	15/20
TOTAL	**79%**

Good for... low volume practising or home recording use

Look elsewhere... If you need a serious rig for full band rehearsals and gigs

Contact: Marshall ☎ 01908 375 411
Web: www.marshallamps.co.uk

Fuzz ferocity with much mid frequency control – take cover, the Bass Blow Torch is here

MXR
Bass Blow Torch

MXR pedals first appeared in the '70s and now lurk under the Jim Dunlop umbrella. As well as replicating classic designs, Dunlop also makes ambitious new pedals such as the Bass Blow Torch fuzz pedal.

The BBT is sturdily constructed from die-cast zinc, and requires two 9V batteries or an 18V power supply, which will provide increased dynamic headroom and clarity. It's pretty tooled-up on the features front, with Volume (overall effect level) and Gain (amount of fuzz) accompanied by a three-band EQ. A Mid Shift switch allows you to select between three midrange frequencies (250Hz, 750Hz and 2kHz) and a Blend control lets you dictate the wet/dry balance. The side-mounted red Torch/On button toggles between overdrive and extreme fuzz, while a Thru jack socket allows you to send a clean signal to a second amp.

FINAL SCORE

Build Quality	19/20
Usability	16/20
Sound	15/20
Value for money	15/20
Vibe	16/20
TOTAL	**81%**

Good for... degrees of fuzz from subtle to total with plenty of variation on this theme

Look elsewhere... for warm, valve-type distortion or lower battery running costs

SOUNDS

When you get the BBT up and running – and a power supply really is the best option – the chainsaw mayhem is pretty unlimited. Moving Mid Shift from right to left increases note clarity and edge, and while the Blend control is vital, the EQ setting is crucial: too little removes both width and response, but too much can induce uncontrollable feedback. Get it right and washy mayhem, punchy fuzz and zingy, aggressive buzzsaw cut are just some of the rewards.

VERDICT

For lovers of fuzz it's a joy, and the Blend/EQ combination makes it really versatile within these limits. You're not going to get warm distortion – but the BBT doesn't promise that anyway.

Contact: JHS ☎ 0113 2865381
Web: www.jimdunlop.com

If you need to serenade your sweet beloved through a ruddy great PA system, try this

Santos Martinez
Bossa Nova

John Hornby Skewes' wallet-friendly line-up of Santos Martinez nylon-stringers tops out with this cutaway electro-classic, formerly made in Romania but now sourced from China. The Bossa Nova creeps in under £400 but it's spec'd up to the nines with an all-solid cedar/rosewood body elaborately edged with maple/abalone purfling. (Interestingly, the top is braced with a hybrid X plus rearward fan pattern rather than the trad full-fan arrangement.) Wide, flat classical necks can be hard work, but this guitar eases the pain with a slim 48mm nut width, plus a hint of friendly fingerboard camber.

Shadow's Dual Natural Pro is a blender system specially for nylon electros, with an undersaddle pickup and soundboard transducer. The preamp has separate EQ for each signal source, plus EQ Shape, phase reverse and variable notching.

FINAL SCORE

Build Quality	19/20
Playability	16/20
Sound	18/20
Value for money	20/20
Vibe	15/20
TOTAL	**80%**

Good for... kidding your mates that you paid an arm and a leg for your new guitar

Look elsewhere... if you simply can't get on with the nylon genre

SOUNDS

You need to be an aficionado to fully appreciate nylon nuances, but the Bossa Nova sounds the part with a buoyant, warm delivery and some nice woody snap when flailing flamenco-style. Intonation, often a bane, is largely trouble-free. Fired up, the preamp offers very good versatility from the polite, neutral clarity of the undersaddle pickup to added body and denser mids when the soundboard source is blended in. There are plenty of good tonal permutations here, plus plenty of control.

VERDICT

The Bossa Nova is hard to fault for the money. It looks lavish, the materials and detailing are good quality, it's an easy player as these things go, and it makes all the right noises. *One Note Samba* here we go, then.

Contact: JHS ☎ 0113 286 5381
Web: www.jhs.com

Solid Foundations

All vintage Telecasters are not created equal. Listen to Phil Harris, and learn a thing or two

The first Telecaster I played was back in the good ol' days in Kennington. My friend and bandmate at the time, Stevie Stewart, had got hire purchase, so one day he came round with this beautiful blonde 1961 Tele with a rosewood neck. I was gobsmacked! It was such a treat back then to play a real American guitar.

However, I've never gigged with Teles. With your normal Teles, you see, you can't wind them up in the same way you can Strats or Les Pauls. I've used them a lot for recording, though, as they are the best chord guitar. They're great for little licks as well as the whole Roy Buchanan deal.

Telecasters rightly take their place in the big four alongside Les Pauls, Strats and Gibson ES-335s. At what number? Depends on the model. If the most collectible guitar is a late '50s Les Paul Standard, then behind it is the likes of a '51 Tele and a '55 or '57 Strat. For some Tele purists, it's anything up to a '53. By late '53 they'd already changed the neck shape and the way it was sprayed. People not as clued-up or as fussy will take a black guard Tele, which go up to '54 – even with the steel bridge saddles. I bought one like this off ex-Stone Mick Taylor years ago, and although it had a black guard it wasn't a 'black guard Tele' to me.

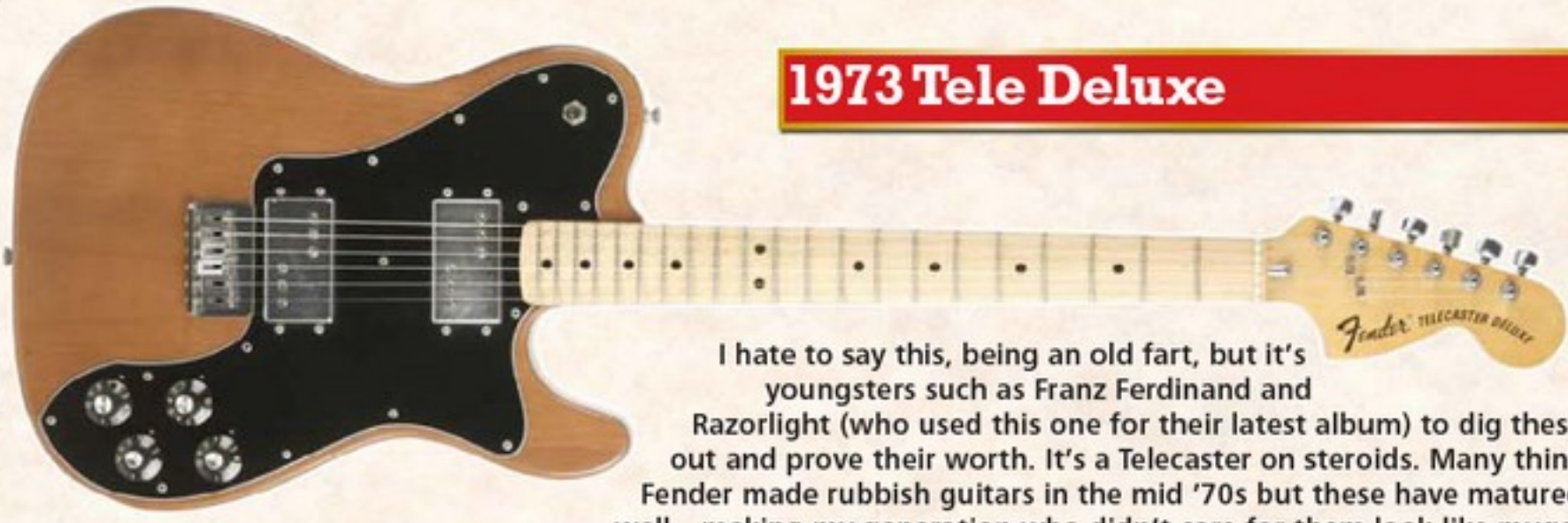
If you want to go for a Tele as we know it, Captain, you've got to go for late '50s onwards. From '50 to '51 Teles had early wiring and had a pan control where the tone is. And on the second range from '51 to '55 you can't use the pickups together, which is one of the trademark sounds. From late '72 onward Teles sound a bit thinner but still have the same vibe. It's not until late '76 when they started using the heavy 'boat anchor' bodies and they start to get a bit twee. So an early '76 should be your starting point in terms of collecting. They can go for up to £3,000, but there are still some private sales of £1,000 to £1,500. If you get that price, go around there and surgically remove their arm with guitar attached to it. The top end of things, like a 1950 Nocaster or Broadcaster will cost you £40,000 to £50,000... it's true – I've seen the cash hitting the table.

My time's almost up, and I haven't even started going into the Tele variations (although if you've a original Thinline in good nick, I'll pay top dollar for it). But I'll leave you with a story about how a Tele Deluxe cost me a '59 Les Paul Standard. In 1973 I was playing a club in Dublin and on a night off went to see another band play. The guitarist had this amazing Standard, although it had Selmer knobs (in those days you went to the radio shop and hoped for the best spares available!). Got talking to the guitarist afterwards and he said he'd swap it for the '73 Tele Deluxe our rhythm guitarist Pete Ward had, which was only six months old. I told Pete if he swapped it I'd buy him the same thing and give him a slap-up meal when we got back to London. Pete wouldn't sell it, as the Deluxe was a present from his then girlfriend, Clare Chamberlain, who just happened to be Neville Chamberlain's granddaughter! Every time I see footage of him with *that* piece of paper I think about the Les Paul I could have had!

1973 Tele Custom

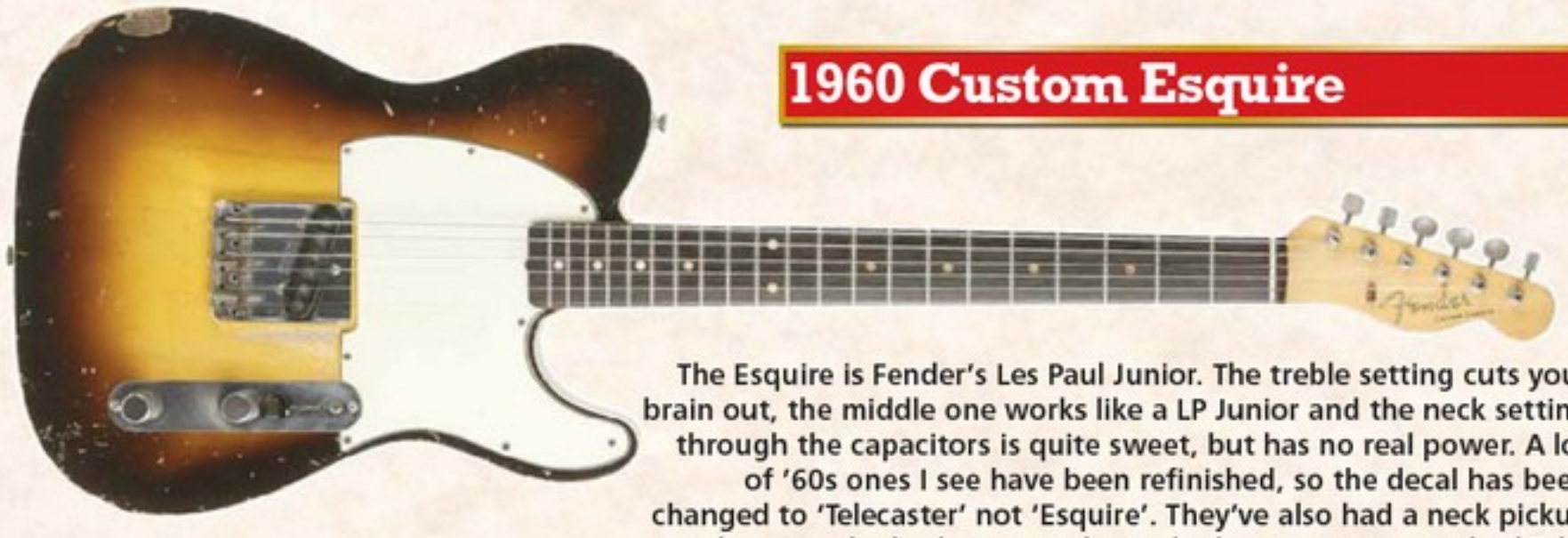
This one's the same model and year's as Keith Richards' – instant credibility! Fender did the right thing mixing a normal Fender bridge pickup with an amazing neck humbucker. The four knobs and toggle switch means you can balance it out like a normal Tele, but with a bass end to die for!

1973 Tele Deluxe



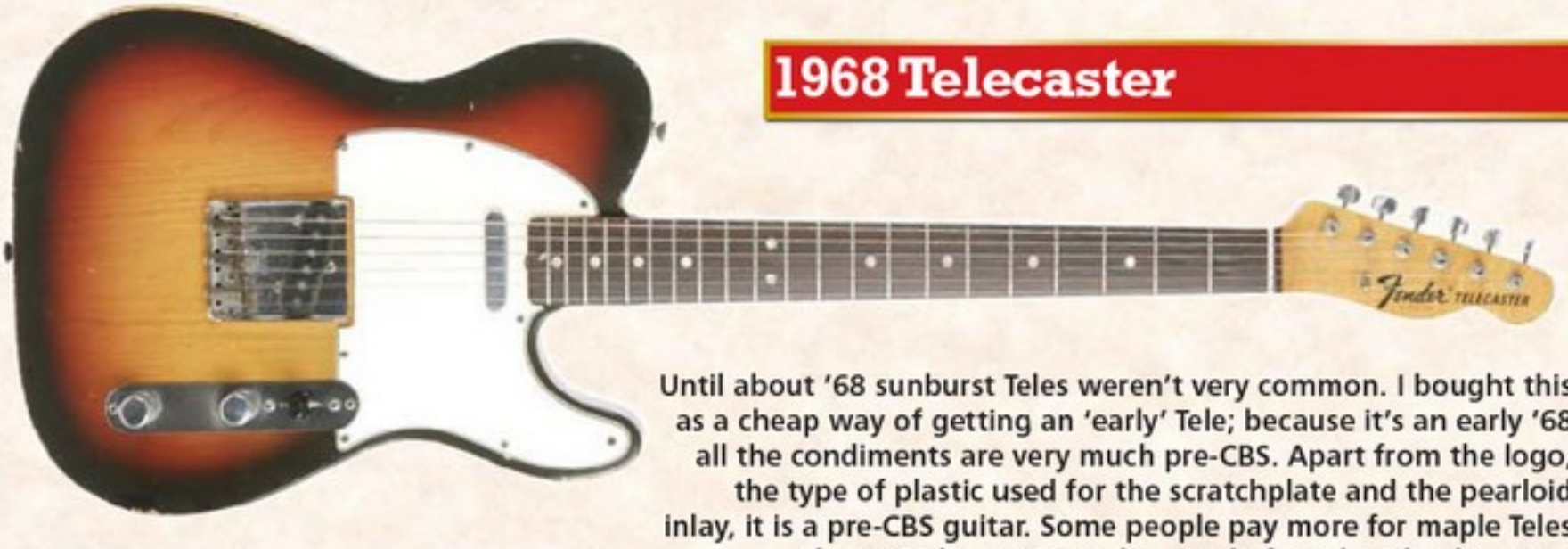
I hate to say this, being an old fart, but it's youngsters such as Franz Ferdinand and Razorlight (who used this one for their latest album) to dig these out and prove their worth. It's a Telecaster on steroids. Many think Fender made rubbish guitars in the mid '70s but these have matured well – making my generation who didn't care for them look like mugs!

1960 Custom Esquire



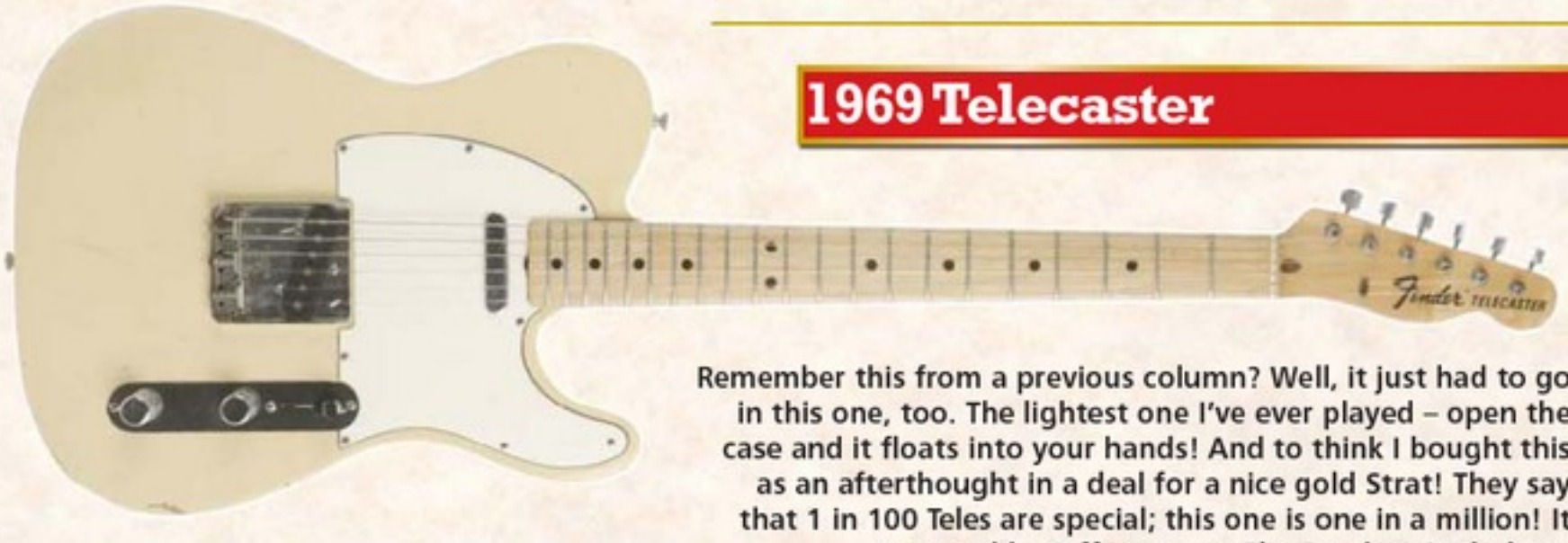
The Esquire is Fender's Les Paul Junior. The treble setting cuts your brain out, the middle one works like a LP Junior and the neck setting through the capacitors is quite sweet, but has no real power. A lot of '60s ones I see have been refinished, so the decal has been changed to 'Telecaster' not 'Esquire'. They've also had a neck pickup put in because the body is routed exactly the same as a standard Tele.

1968 Telecaster



Until about '68 sunburst Teles weren't very common. I bought this as a cheap way of getting an 'early' Tele; because it's an early '68 all the condiments are very much pre-CBS. Apart from the logo, the type of plastic used for the scratchplate and the pearloid inlay, it is a pre-CBS guitar. Some people pay more for maple Teles from '68 because it's the year before the 'skunk' stripe.

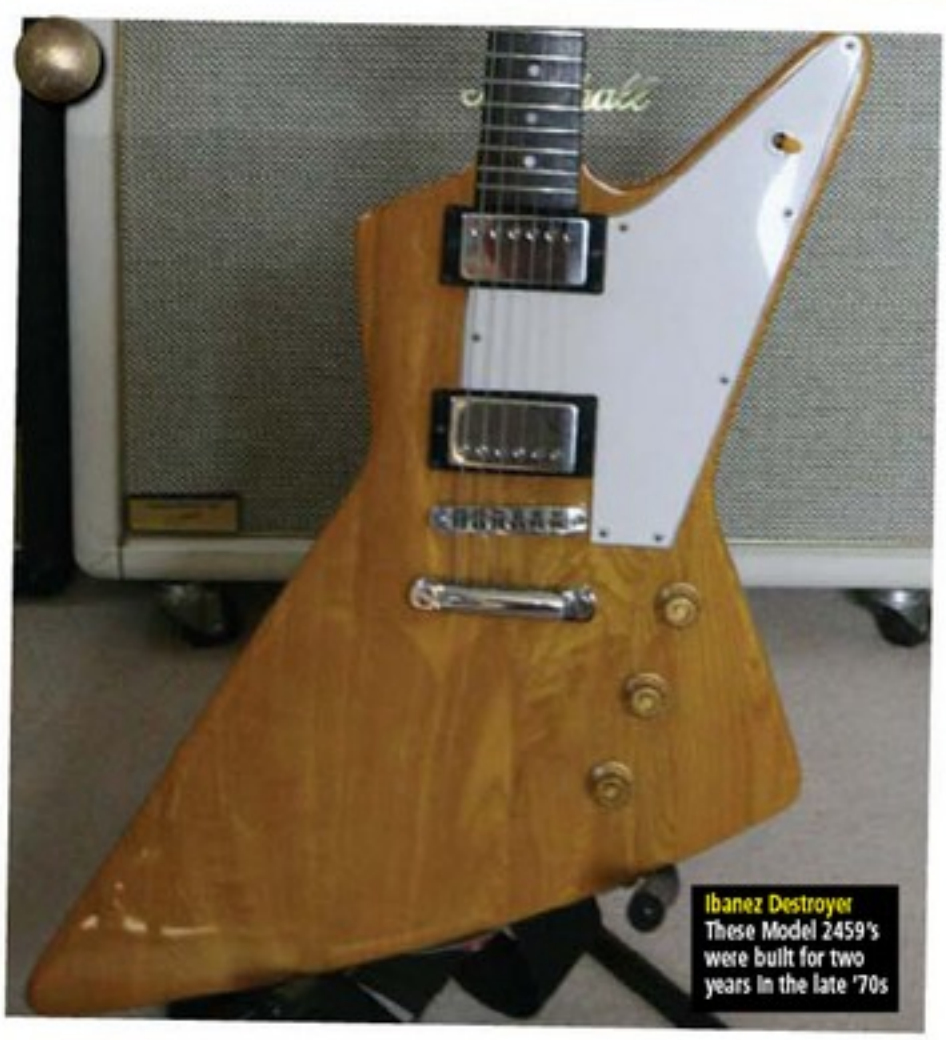
1969 Telecaster



Remember this from a previous column? Well, it just had to go in this one, too. The lightest one I've ever played – open the case and it floats into your hands! And to think I bought this as an afterthought in a deal for a nice gold Strat! They say that 1 in 100 Teles are special; this one is one in a million! It was used by Jeff Lynne on The Beatles' *Anthology*.

Turning Japanese

Charlie Cash is besotted with one of the best-regarded of all Far East makers – Ibanez. Richard Stephenson is beginning to see the light



Ibanez Destroyer
These Model 2459's were built for two years in the late '70s

When any guitar enthusiast thinks of a 'serious' collector, images are conjured up of rooms decked with SGs, Les Pauls, Strats and other extremely sought-after guitars. This is true of Charlie Cash's collection, but if you look close, you'll see that the all-too-familiar guitar shapes are adorned with a slightly different brand name… that of Japanese company Ibanez.

'As a guitar fan I have the utmost respect for established vintage brands such as Fender and Gibson,' Charlie begins. 'However, their huge price tags mean they are out of the price range of many people, myself included! I collect Ibanez guitars because they are well made and extremely reliable.'

He's not alone: as the A-grade models from the big-name factories become increasingly expensive, many guitar-fanciers both here and abroad are starting to turn their attention to lesser makes. 'There's an ever-growing online community exclusively collecting vintage Ibanez models,' Charlie confides, 'and the good news for me is that guitars like mine are slowly but surely maturing in price.'

Following a light lunch of locally-produced bacon, black pudding and eggs provided by

Rocket Rolls Left, a 1977 2387CT; right, a 1982 Rocket Roll II in lovely white paint

Triple treat Left to right: a 1977 2680 Bob Weir Standard, a '30s Ibanez Salvador archtop, and a 2372 Recording from around 1974

Charlie's partner and fellow guitar enthusiast Julie, we get down to business. Our tour starts with a brief but helpful history lesson. 'Ibanez actually started as a guitar importer, shipping back and forth from Japan to Spain in the early 20th century, but it was in the '70s and '80s that they really took off with their extremely accurate replicas,' Charlie explains. He takes down a 1977 Destroyer model – a guitar that looks remarkably like a Gibson Explorer – to illustrate his point. 'This guitar is a prime example. As you can see, it has an obvious tie-in to a certain model by a certain well-known company, but I personally think it easily stands up to the actual model it's trying to replicate.'

This seems like a bold statement, but a quick strum by our photographer – a keen collector of real Gibson Explorers – leaves him very impressed. Charlie can supply further proof of the guitar's playability and sound: 'I run my own business, Charlie's Clinic, for sports injuries and general therapies, and the rock band Thunder is one of my clients. I took this guitar to the soundcheck of one their gigs for them to have a look at. It was at this point that the guitarist realised he'd left his Gibson Les Paul back at home, which was miles away. A play on mine left him convinced of its playing ability, and he actually used it for the entire gig. That's some compliment!'

'Thunder's guitarist had left his Les Paul at home, so he used my Ibanez Destroyer for the entire gig. That's some compliment!'

You might think that old Ibanez guitars are only collectable due to the company's ability to copy other brands, but Charlie believes that all Ibanez products have their own identity.

'Take my two Rocket Roll models, which are based on the infamous Flying V,' he demonstrates. 'They have all the hallmarks of the original Gibson, but the neck is actually made out of a Japanese wood known as Sen. It looks like North American ash but it responds like mahogany, which means it has a warm sound and is more flattering to the pickups.'

By integrating Japanese culture into their designs, Ibanez also created its own unique style. Charlie flips open a case to reveal a recent J-Custom model, known as the 'Itch' guitar. 'This is a very rare model from 1997,' he says. 'Only 12 of

Room 335 A crazy-rare 1978 Geoff Muldaur model, like an AS200, but one of only two ever built

Itchy and scratchy The infamous JCS540 from 1997, one of a series of just 12

them were made, and I believe this is the only one in England. The crazy tie-dye effect is actually based on the colour scheme of a traditional Japanese bowl. Strangely enough, the side-effect of the paint they used made the factory workers develop a temporary itch, which led to the strange nickname!'

This discussion of Ibanez's occasionally surprising production methods leads Charlie onto another interesting subject – that of the difficulty of dating the instruments.

'For some reason Ibanez only started numbering their instruments from 1974, so it's hard to pinpoint a lot of guitars down to a certain date or production line,' he sighs. 'Here's a funny story. I went to a big guitar fair and all of the leading executives from Ibanez were there. They exclusively revealed to me that they were going to make the 'John McLaughlin' model as a *Stairway To Heaven*-type 6/12-string with a through neck – something they said they'd never done before. Well, that was until I showed them that I already had one from the late '70s. You should have seen their jaws drop. They had no idea that they'd ever made one!'

'Ibanez told me they were going to issue a 6/12 guitar. I told them I had one. You should have seen their jaws drop – they had no idea they'd ever made one'

NAMM vet A one-off show special, a 699-12 12-string acoustic in tasty maple

Trees Of Life The Ibanez hunter's dream: a one-off all-maple 2670 doubleneck from around '77-'78

The guitar in question is an absolute marvel to look at. 'It has all the high-spec hardware including a "Gibraltar" brass bridge,' Charlie points out proudly. 'The pearl leaf inlay on the neck and headstock has all been routed by hand. It's also very heavy! I mean, how could they forget about making a beast of an instrument like this?'

Like all collectors, a lot of Charlie's guitars have been purchased on internet auction sites, and two of his online finds have proved to be very special. 'I bought a Paul Stanley PS10 Iceman online from Germany, and it turned out to be a limited edition model,' he marvels. 'You can tell it's not a regular one by the fact that the scratchplate and hardware are all in gold rather than the normal silver. It's number 95 out of 500, and it was an absolute steal.

'However, my best online purchase was my Ibanez acoustic 12-string, which I found in America. It's a showpiece from one of the NAMM exhibitions with serial number 0001, and it's a great playing instrument. And do you know how much it cost me? $100 – that's £65! It was so cheap, I didn't have to even pay duty on it when it was transported across the Atlantic. I love America! God bless them all!'

Ice Ice Baby Left, a '96 ICJ100WZ Iceman White Zombie signature; right, its rare ancestor, a non-export 2663 pre-Iceman 'Artist Standard' from around '74

Mystery axe No info is available on this Firebird-type Ibanez from around 1977. Could it be a Model 2348?

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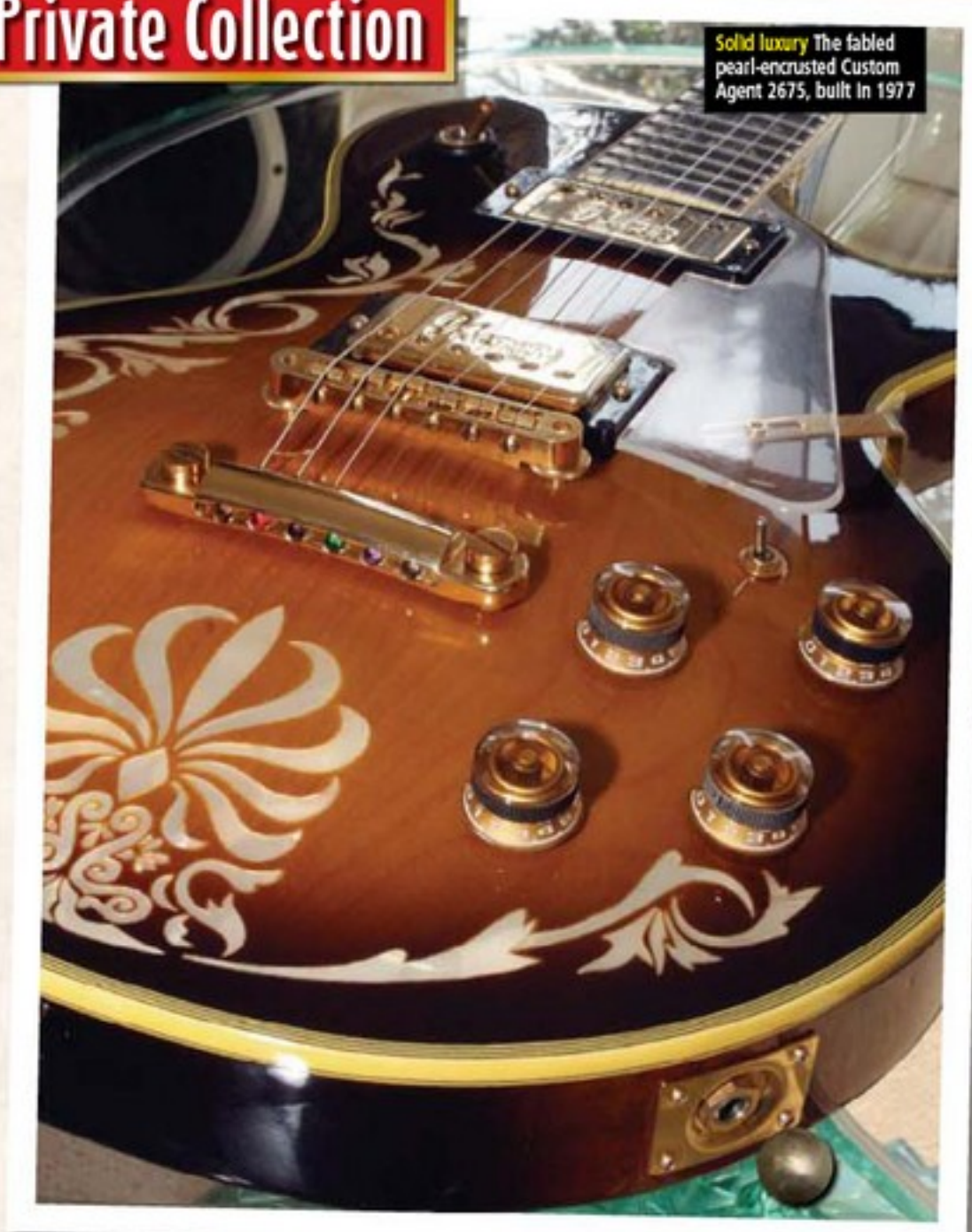
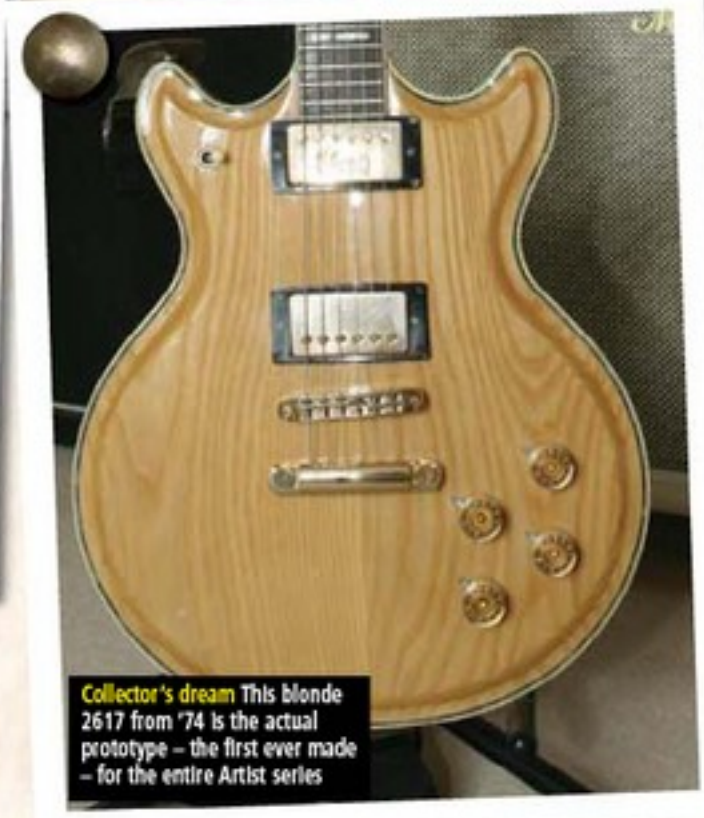


Solid luxury The fabled pearl-encrusted Custom Agent 2675, built in 1977

Maple syrup One of only eight known to exist – a super-heavy model 2399 L-5S Deluxe. Yes, Ibanez simply called it that



Collector's dream This blonde 2617 from '74 is the actual prototype – the first ever made – for the entire Artist series

'It would be interesting to find out which comes out on top, the Custom Agent or a Les Paul. Mind you, I'm biased'

Pearly queen A 'regular' Custom Agent, from 1977

Our talk of guitar rarities leads Charlie onto the jewel in the crown, his Ibanez Custom Agent 2675. Indeed, he's so proud of the instrument that a velvet wall-mount has been built especially for it.

'This guitar is extremely rare, and almost mythical in reputation,' he promises. 'It has a thicker body and a thinner neck than a standard Custom Agent, with a tortoiseshell headstock and pearloid tuners. The floral pattern on the body is routed, again unlike the standard model. I had it flown over from America, but it wasn't as cheap as my acoustic 12-string! It certainly gives a Les Paul a run for its money.'

Charlie leans over to the wall mount and takes the guitar down; 'I think you should try it, it's definitely worth the experience.' He's true to his word. While having the look of a Gibson, the guitar certainly has its own identity, plus a smooth action and a resonant sound. 'It would be interesting to see what comes out on top between this and an original Les Paul,' muses Charlie as he returns the guitar to its throne. 'Although, mind you, I am pretty biased!'

No guitar collection would be complete without a wildcard, a guitar that's completely different from the rest, and Charlie doesn't disappoint us with his Electra Magnum. 'I found this guitar on my travels while I was tracking down various Ibanez models. It's actually a well-balanced instrument and the craftsmanship of it is second to none – especially the maple leaves carved on the body. Apparently ELO used to use them. This one is in bad need of an overhaul and re-fretting.'

As if to prove this point, a quick test-run by your reporter results, embarrassingly, in the nut breaking. 'See what I mean?' grins Charlie. 'Don't worry about it. It gives me an excuse to get it sorted now!'

This little hiccup allows us to move onto the other type of musical equipment Charlie collects – amplifiers. Unlike his guitars, Charlie has chosen to accumulate a brand that is well-respected and sought after worldwide. 'When collecting amplifiers, there is no compromise,' he pronounces, 'and in my opinion, Jim Marshall's amps cannot be beaten.

'It's funny, though... I never actually set out to collect amplifiers, as such. They just seemed to have come my way as time

G9.2tt

ZOOM

Guitarist
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Private Collection

Big cat The super-exclusive Marshall JAG amp, essentially a leather-clad, gold-plated Bluesbreaker

Fab fifties Marshalls, top to bottom: a '72 50W JMP, a '70 50W JMP, a 1980 JCM800 Lead and an orange JCM800 from the '90s

'The craftsmanship on the Electra Magnum is second to none, especially the carved maple leaves. Apparently ELO used to use them'

has progressed! Take the two JMP amps. The top one spent years in a garden shed and was sold to me on the assumption I'd use it for spare parts. You must be joking! It wasn't in great condition, but I soon got it back in working order. They're great sounding amps, much creamier that a lot of other Marshall models.'

Again the internet has thrown up some interesting purchases, especially Charlie's orange mid-'90s JCM800. 'I bought the amp online for a good price, but when I went to collect it I discovered that the seller also had the cabs at his dad's house. I made him an offer and ended up taking the set home. It's the amplifier I turn to for day-to-day use. The speakers are new 65W G-12's and the sound is sharp in the high end. I see it as a fully capable gigging amp.'

Although he buys amplifiers with the main intention of playing them, there are some that Charlie would never dare to gig with. 'This 2003 Marshall Jaguar combo is extremely rare,' he says. 'Only 40 of them were built. I believe you could originally only get them through entering a lottery and then paying once you'd "won". This gave the general public more of a chance of getting hold of one. Of course, an exclusive few were eventually given to rock royalty, but because they were never an "official" product available for general sale, a few were left gathering dust in the factory.

'As I had become known on the circuit as a Marshall collector, I was lucky enough to eventually acquire one. They're awesome amplifiers, and the real leather exterior was supplied by the Jaguar car company. Not only that, but all the hardware, including the footpedal, is gold-plated. I know of one Jaguar owner who gigs up and down the country with his, but mine is an investment, and it's staying put!'

Another of Charlie's 'investment' amplifiers couldn't be left alone to mature in value. 'My white 35th Anniversary 50W amp with the angled cab was bought with similar intentions to the Jaguar. Only 250 were made, but I found that the volume had an all-or-nothing response to it.' Naturally he turned to the right people to amend the problem; 'Marshall took it in and modified it for me, so there's now a middle ground for me to play with.'

As with all guitar-mad gear accumulators, Charlie's quest for new equipment is never over – and despite already having a collection that's impressive, to say the least, he's always on the look out for more. His new avenue of interest concerns a familiar brand, but this time he's aiming for accessories rather than guitars or amplifiers. 'The original Ibanez footpedals are starting to go up in price and I think I've located someone who has a load in storage,' he winks. 'I'm definitely going to pursue that a bit further!'

No Ibanez content! Well, hey, nobody's perfect. An unusual Electra Magnum, mid-'70s

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Music On The MOVE

Got the burning desire to record the sound of your band at its best? Huw Price has advice on what gear you'll need to set up your very own mobile studio

While it's true that computer software can handle pretty much everything you need for electronic music, recording a band still requires a lot of hardware. Following on from our mic collection article (*Guitar & Bass* Vol 18 No 3), this month we're looking at the kit you'll need for a computer-based portable studio.

RECORDING MEDIA

Regardless of the analogue versus digital debate, most of us these days record directly onto our computers. Even as a diehard analogue fan I'd have to admit that the microphones, the acoustic characteristics of the space and the general vibe of the session will have far more bearing on the qualities of the end result than the recording medium. It'll eventually end up in the digital domain anyway, whether on a CD or MySpace.

Obviously the most convenient type of computer is a laptop, but whatever you use, you'll need some sort of audio interface. The cheapest ones provide stereo in and out, but for multitracking you'll need multiple inputs and outputs. The price of these units has really dropped recently, and there are plenty to choose from. The Digidesign DIGI 002 is packaged with Pro Tools LE software and you get eight analogue inputs and outputs with four built-in mic preamps. You could also check out the MOTU 828 MkII, which provides 10 analogue inputs and outputs with two mic preamps and a very simple zero-latency monitoring system. You could augment this with the MOTU 8Pre to add a further eight mic pre's to your core system.

MONITORING ISSUES

You can check your work with headphones but they can be tiring to use all day, and only one person will be able to listen at any time. Consider some high-quality active monitors: you won't have to carry around a separate amp, and most of them provide EQ to adapt to the generally imperfect listening conditions encountered on location recordings.

The centre consoles of analogue studio mixing desks always have 'monitor strips' to let you adjust the volume, switch to mono to check phase issues, and select various monitor sources such as the main mix, CD or MP3 player. In addition you can switch between different speaker systems, and they provide headphone routing and a talkback

facility. Fortunately makers have recognised the monitoring problems inherent with computer recordings, and you can now buy the stand-alone equivalent of a mixing desk monitor channel. Check out the SPL MTC 2381, or the Mackie Big Knob. These products also include talkback mics so you can talk to the musicians without having to walk from the control room into the live area.

Don't forget, musicians need to be able to hear themselves when they're playing to click tracks or overdubbing. Whether you're using a dedicated headphone amp or something like the SPL or the Mackie, you'll need a substantial length of cable to send the signal to the live area. I went to B&Q and bought a 25-metre drum of cable with live, neutral and earth wires and soldered a stereo 1/4" jack on each end. The tip and ring connections for the left/right channels are connected to the blue and brown wires and the negative (sleeve) connection uses the yellow/green wire. I simply plug into the headphone socket of my Mackie Big Knob, roll out enough cable to reach the musicians, and plug a set of cans into the socket.

MICROPHONE PREAMPS

The signal from each microphone will have to be boosted up to line level by a mic preamp. Most digital audio interfaces with multiple analogue inputs only have a couple of mic preamps… fine if you only need to record straight to stereo, but if you'll need more than two mics to record a drum kit or a whole band. So – extra mic preamps.

A more advanced audio interface with several built-in mic pre's or a small mixing desk will solve this problem, but the down side is that all the channels will sound the same. Experienced engineers recognise that the sonic characteristics of mic preamps can be used to create tonal variety. For instance, the mic pre's in a MOTU 828 MkII are clean, quiet and fairly neutral; they compare well with mic preamps in many modern mixing desks but they're nothing like the fat, chewy valve and transistor preamps in classic equipment, where the input and output transformers as well as the distortion characteristics of the components gave music-friendly colouration. Rather than tie yourself to several identical-sounding

Here's Huw's live recording set-up. Audio interface, mic pre's, compressor and a mini patchbay are all flightcased for easy transportation; note Quested active monitors and the Mackie Big Knob controller

channels, why not mix and match preamps to create more interesting sounds?

Fortunately there are plenty of affordable but characterful mic preamps these days too. TL Audio made its name producing budget valve-based equipment; 2 Fat features a mic amp/DI and a compressor with manual controls as well presets for various instruments. Alternatively Summit Audio enjoys a fine reputation, and their 2BA-221 Mic and Line Module might be worth checking out.

EQUALISERS

You'll need to weigh up the number of mic pre's you need against other considerations like compression and EQ. Many engineers prefer to record without EQ, even in studios where the monitoring can be relied on; when recording on location it's probably best to avoid it altogether since you're probably going to end up with a makeshift control room with lousy acoustics, or in the live room with the band. Equalisation can be destructive, so if you commit an EQ'd sound to hard disk you might regret it later. Best let your mics and preamps do the work and postpone making critical EQ decisions until you can really hear what's going on – so leave your equalisers at home.

The only exception to this rule is the use of high pass filters. Pro recording studios should be acoustically treated to prohibit external noise – low-frequency garbage from traffic, humming electrical equipment and the like – from reaching any mics. If you're recording in a church or a village hall you're likely to get plenty of rumble, and multiplied over 16 or 24 tracks it's enough to make the bottom end of your recordings muddy and indistinct. Unless you're recording a kick drum, a floor tom or any instrument that's designed to produce a bassy sound, feel free to use the High Pass Filters that you'll find on many mics and mic preamps when you're recording electric and acoustic guitar, vocals and so on.

COMPRESSORS

Unlike EQ, compression can be a necessity. Some sound sources' wide dynamic range presents technical problems when recording digitally because there's an absolute maximum level that can't be exceeded without nasty-sounding distortion. Compressors, and their close cousins limiters, can control the high transient volume peaks that can push the recording level over the top. In a sense they're a bit like automatic volume controls, and they're invaluable for vocals, bass (especially slap styles) and acoustic guitar. It's tricky to keep an eye on all the channels as you're recording, and you won't want to abandon a decent take just because one section sounds distorted.

Compressors can also be used to dramatically shape the sound. Like EQ, heavy compression should be postponed until you're mixing because if you record the effect, you're stuck with it – but one or two channels of compression are almost essential for recording. Fortunately

EQ can be destructive. Let your mics and preamps do the work, and postpone critical EQ decisions until later

Home-made headphone extension cable made from a reel of mains flex

Characterful and affordable mic preamps include TL Audio's 2 Fat, with a mic amp/ DI and a compressor with manual controls

lots of mic preamps, like the TLA Fat Funker and the Focusrite Twin Track Pro, have built in compression and EQ, or you could buy dedicated a unit like the Drawmer DL241, the Behringer Tube Composer T1952, the TL Audio 5021 or the Summit Audio TLA-50.

ASSORTED HARDWARE

Once you have your recording and monitoring systems sorted out, it's time to consider all the other bits and pieces. First on the list has to be mic stands: to record a three-piece rock band live, I'll take at least eight. That's four for the drums, one each for the guitar and bass, one for the lead vocal and one extra for room ambience.

Next you'll need to organise your cables. You can never have too many mic cables – sooner or later, they always go faulty. You can buy them ready-made, but the cheapest solution is to make your own. Maplins and RS Components sell drums of mic cable and male and female XLR connectors. Don't worry about keeping cable runs short; recording mics have balanced low-impedance outputs that can easily drive a 50-metre cable. Believe me, you'll never curse a microphone cable for being too long!

Power supply is always an issue, so invest in a few four-way mains blocks and a long mains extension cable. Also figure out if you need speaker cables, patch cables and extra guitar cables. Like any engineering pro, you should also carry a selection of screwdrivers, a multimeter and a soldering kit in case you need to carry out on-the-spot fault diagnosis and repairs.

SETTING UP

Once you arrive at a location the first thing to decide is where the band should set up and where you should put the recording gear. Obviously the musicians should be in the space with the most suitable room acoustics; after all, you're there to record, not to mix. But for the recording gear, should you pitch camp in a separate room or are you better off in the same room as the band? Engineering convention suggests that you set up in another room. The main reason is that with 20 or so feet and a couple of closing doors, you've got a better chance of attenuating the noise from the band enough to actually hear what you're recording.

The alternative isn't as bad as it might seem. If you've got decent mics and you're pretty familiar with them, you can probably place them in the vicinity of the sweet spot without worrying too much about the minutiae of the sound. Do a couple of test recordings to make sure everything sounds okay, and move the mics if you need to, but then get on with it. When the schedule's tight the musicians will prefer to just start recording rather than watch you arsing about with sonic details they can't even hear.

Solution Device in action. These informal sessions can produce great results

Recording like this can be a lot of fun. It breaks down the barriers between engineer and the band; communication is much easier and everybody feels part of the process. You might have to use headphones for monitoring when the drums or guitars are loud but you can switch back to speakers for guitar and vocal overdubs and, if you place your mics carefully, you'll be amazed how little spillage you get from monitors. Some singers even prefer to sing along with monitors rather than use headphones.

CONCLUSION

If you can find a decent-sounding room, you'll be amazed by the results you can achieve. When you consider that the only live area in many studios these days is a vocal booth, you'll probably get better results by going DIY anyway. If you get the opportunity, take a look at the place you'll be using in advance. You'll be better able to plan the set up, which will get things underway much more quickly. It's also a good idea to draw up a checklist – see box, left – to help you when you're getting all your kit together.

Thanks to Tom, Sam and Tom of Solution Device for letting us take pictures during their recording session. See www.myspace.com/solutiondeviceband to hear how it turned out!

Checklist

MICROPHONES

AKG D20 – kick drum, bass
Beyer M201 – snare, guitars
Coles 4038 – overheads, guitar, vocals, brass
Coles 4040 – overheads, guitar, vocals, brass
Neumann CMV563 – vocals, general purpose
Neumann M7, M8, M9 capsules
Red Type B with capsule – vocals, general purpose
Beyer C160 – overheads, guitar, vocals, brass
Oktava MC012 – hats, acoustic guitar, ambience, percussion

CABLES

XLR to XLR – as many as possible
Guitar cables
Patch cables
Headphone extension cable
Monitor speaker cables

MISCELLANEOUS

Mac G4 laptop
Flight case
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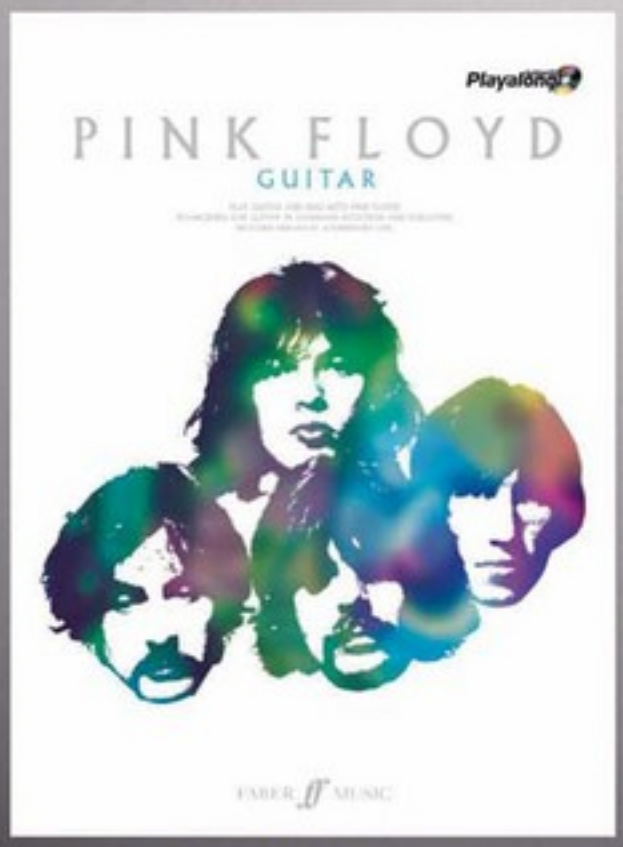

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Home Luthier Pt.5

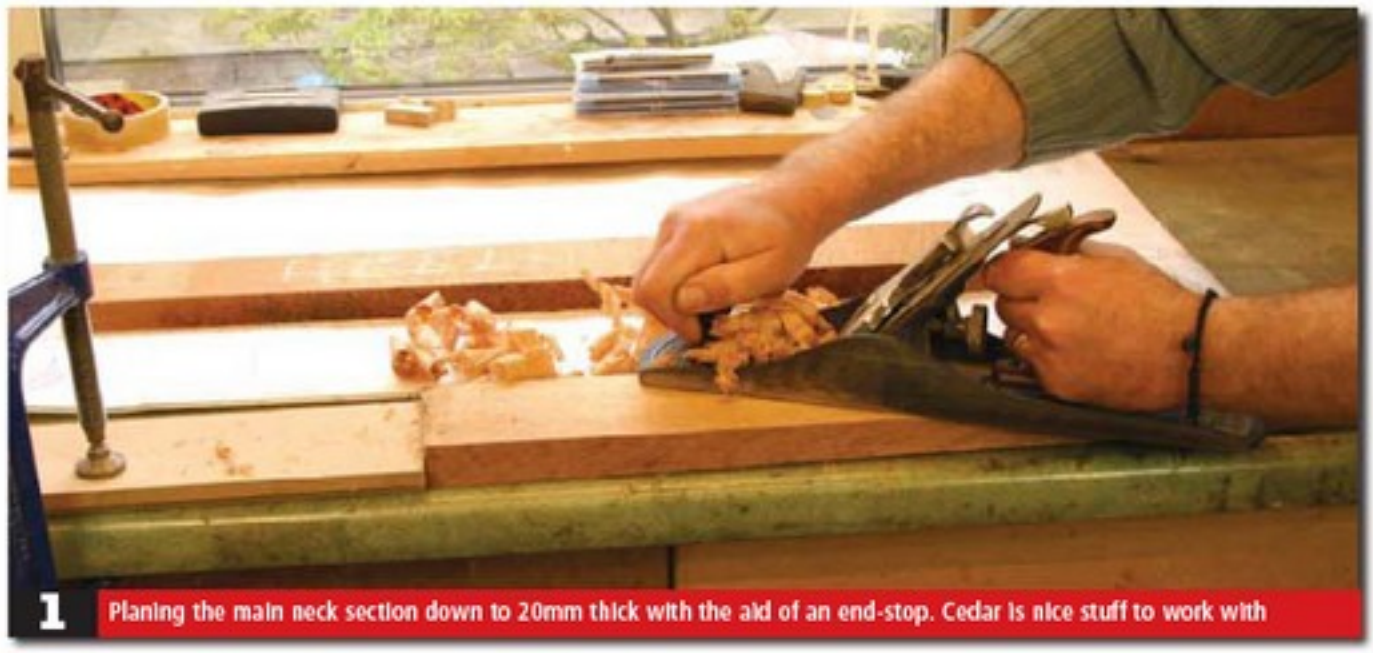
Making your own neck and installing a truss rod might seem like an impossibly complex task, but this month our spruce guru Dave King will show you exactly how it can be accomplished in nice, easy steps

So far we've got our sides bent, the kerfing and end blocks fixed, and the top and the back sanded to thickness. Now it's time to start on the neck and neck join.

In your kit you'll find two pieces of cedar, one straight-grained, quarter-sawn piece marked 'neck' and one marked 'heel'. We need to plane the neck piece up to a finished size of 77mm wide by 20mm thick. From the heel piece you'll need to cut a piece off at 300mm long, and finish it to 50mm wide and 21mm thick. Keep the off-cut; we'll be using that later.

Before you start planing make sure your plane is sharp and that your work surface is flat. I've clamped a 'stop' to my bench **(Pic 1)** to give me something to push against. Don't put the clamp too close to your workpiece, you'll end up hitting it or, worse, squashing your fingers between the plane and the clamp (I've done it, and it hurts).

These pieces need to be perfectly flat, so keep checking with a straight-edge. It's a good idea to keep turning the timber round; do a little on one side then turn it over and do a little more, slowly bringing it down to 21mm. You'll also need to check that it's not twisted. This is tricky to do just by looking down the timber, so we use something called 'winding sticks'. These are simply two pieces of straight timber about 300mm x 20mm x 10mm. By looking down the timber and across the sticks – I've coloured the edges of mine to make them easier to see – the two edges should be parallel **(Pic 2)**. If they're not, then the timber is twisted. If one of the sticks is high in one corner then you'll have to remove material from the same corner to bring the sticks back down in line. Once you have each piece thicknessed you'll need to bring them to width (77mm for the neck piece and 50mm for the heel), once again making sure the edges are straight, square and parallel **(Pic 3)**. Spend some time getting this right; if the surfaces are not true then you'll run into problems when we start to glue the neck pieces together.



1 Planing the main neck section down to 20mm thick with the aid of an end-stop. Cedar is nice stuff to work with

2 Winding sticks exaggerate any twist in the wood

3 Making sure the edges are square and straight

SCARF JOINT

We now need to mark out the neck blank for the scarf joint. We're not going to make the

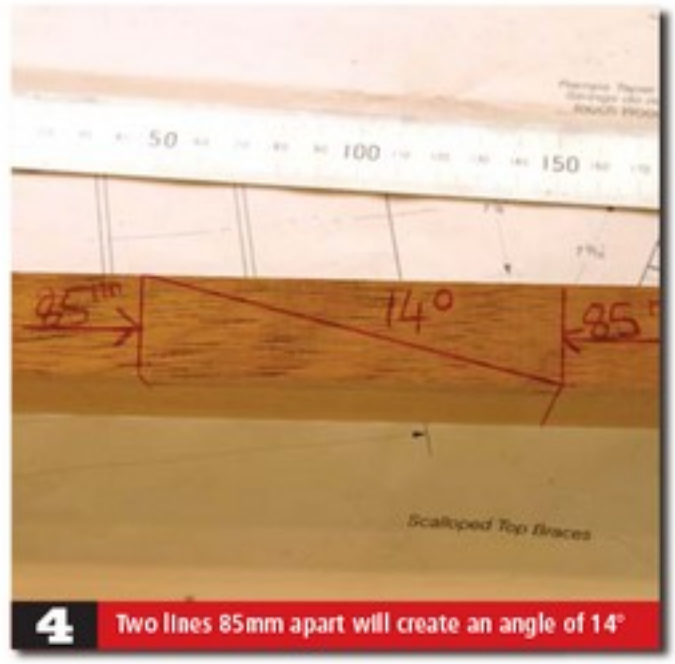
neck as it is in the drawing, since cutting from one piece of timber is wasteful. We need to think of our rainforests these days. The angle of the headstock should be 14°. If you've planed the blank to the correct thickness of 20mm, then squaring to lines marked across and 85mm apart, then joining opposite sides should give you an angle of 14° **(Pic 4)**. Make sure you leave the shorter 'headstock' piece long enough, 125mm on the shortest face.

To cut down the line I've clamped the blank down to hold it securely, then cut with a tenon saw **(Pic 5)**. Don't worry if it isn't perfect: we'll need to plane it next anyway. With the two pieces cut, they can be 'folded over' on each other and the surfaces cleaned up for a perfect join. I've clamped the two pieces together with some packers underneath to lift them high enough to allow me to run my plane off the end **(Pic 6)**. Make sure to plane the surfaces flat and square; if you don't, the headstock will not line up correctly with the rest of the neck.

When you've finished planing the join, remember what was the 'front' of the workpiece will now go on the 'back'. You should now have a perfect neck join, and the two pieces can be glued together. Clamp the two pieces together dry first to make sure you've got everything correct, and make sure you've got 'stops' either end of the neck or the two pieces will slide apart **(Pic 7)**.

Since the headstock was to be joined to the 20mm-thick neck, we left it at 20mm for easier planing and to get the best possible joint. However, because we're using a flat headstock, we'll need to finish it at 13mm (plus the head veneer, which will make a total of 15mm). On the drawing it's a lot thicker, but that's meant for a slotted headstock, which is far more difficult: save that for your second guitar! Mark out the headstock to 13mm, hold it securely, and plane down to the line, checking it's staying flat and square **(Pic 8)**.

Now we can use the piece for the heel that we planed up earlier. From my 300mm length I've cut one piece 70mm long and two at 40mm long. Each piece is 21mm thick; add the 20mm for our neck, and we should get a total depth at the heel of 83mm.



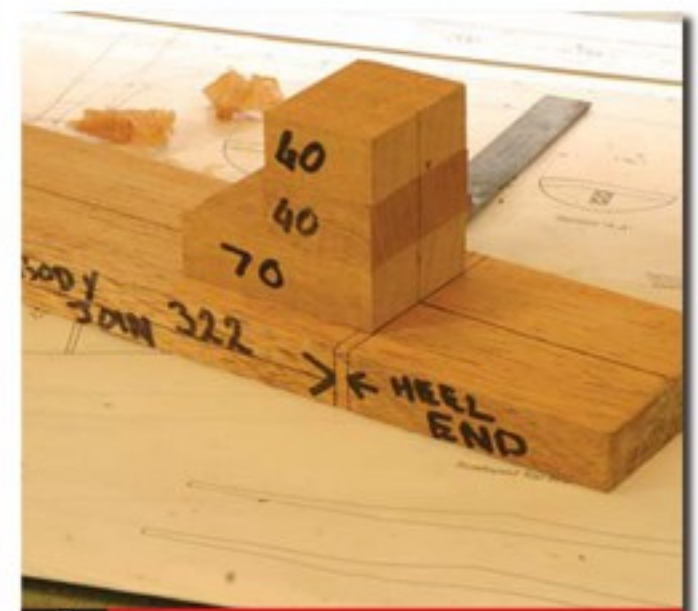
4 Two lines 85mm apart will create an angle of 14°

5 Cutting along the angle with a tenon saw

6 Planing the angled saw-cut down perfectly flat

7 Gluing the headstock, with stops to prevent sliding

8 The entire headstock is planed down to 13mm



9 Measuring out the position of the three heel blocks

10 Gluing the heel blocks in place with a pair of clamps

11 The truss rod needs three different sizes of slot

Carefully mark out the position of the heel block **(Pic 9)**. The body join is at the 12th fret which is 322mm (half the scale length of 644mm) away from the inside edge of the nut. Square round the neck at this point and draw another line 5mm away from this at 327mm. We want to glue the heel block on at 327mm: this will make it a lot easier to cut through later when we fit it to the body.

Before gluing the heel block on, mark a centre line down the neck and the blocks, and check your measurements once, twice, three times. You can glue the blocks on in one go, or one at a time. Try and rub all the joints together to spread the glue and help it all grab together **(Pic 10)**.

Now we can cut the groove for the truss rod. Again, mark a line exactly down the centre of the neck, but this time on the face. Our truss rod needs three different sized grooves: one 6.25mm x 9.5mm for the rod to sit in, one 7mm x 10.25mm for the end of the rod to sit on, and a 9mm x 11mm clearance groove for the adjusting nut. You can either buy three separate cutters or just use a 6.25mm cutter and adjust the sideways movement on the fence to increase the width **(Pic 11)**. The truss rod should start at the body join. Before routing, make sure that the neck is held securely and won't slip **(Pic 12)**. If you're unsure of the three different depths at the start of the rod, then use a test piece first.

With the groove cut we can now get the head veneer stuck on. I've marked the headstock out first; I know we'll shortly cover these up with the veneer, but it's a good idea to do it just so you'll see clearly what's happening **(Pic 13)**. Before we stick the veneer on we need to cut a groove in the front to match the one underneath for the truss rod, and plane a 15° bevel on the end to match the angle of the headstock **(Pic 14)**. I've started my veneer 5.5mm away from the end of the board; on the drawing it's 6.5mm. Bone blanks normally come at 6mm, and we don't want to end up with a loose nut. I've drilled some holes either side of the veneer and at the top to put some panel pins through to prevent the veneer from sliding when you glue it on. It's important that it doesn't, as the front edge is finished and needs to stay square and 5.5mm from the end of the board. Glue the head veneer on, making sure you've got clamping blocks both sides to protect the headstock – the back of the headstock is a finished surface, we don't want to mark it **(Pic 15)**. Don't forget if you get stuck you can e-mail me at help@daveking-acoustics.com!

12 Routing the slot. Do the long, thinnest cut first

13 The head marked out, with trussrod nut clearance

14 Headstock veneer is pinned 5.5mm from fingerboard

15 Gluing the veneer, with blocks to protect headstock

NEXT MONTH:

In Part 6 of our acoustic self-build special next month we'll be bracing the top and the back, and also cutting out the neck

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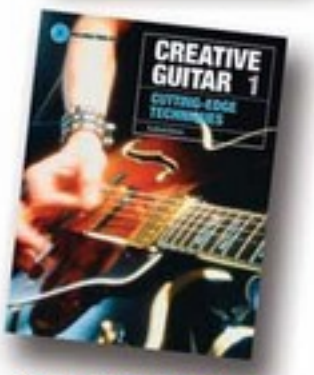

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Ibanez S2170FW Natural £839
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Line 6 Variax 300 Acoustic (Natural) £349
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Maverick F-1 Trem (Blue) £459.99
Maverick F-4 (Blueburst) £579.99
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Musicman Stingray Limited Edition (Black/Gold Hardware) £1299
Musicman Stingray (White/Black Pearl Scratchplate) £999
Ovation 1778T-S Black £799
Ovation 6778lx New England Burst £899
Ovation S771AX-4 Natural £759
PRS Santana SE (Various Options) from £299
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PRS USA Custom 22 (Amber) £1795
PRS USA Custom 22 20th Anniversary (Whale Blue) £1795
PRS USA McCarty 10 Top (McCarty Tobacco Sunburst) £1995
PRS USA Custom 22 20th Ann. ARTIST PACK (Dark Cherry Burst) £2595
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Tanglewood TW1000CE (Natural) £459
Tanglewood TW47 (Natural Mahogany) £459
Tanglewood TW1000 (Natural) £369
Tanglewood TW15NS (Natural Satin) £329
Tanglewood TW115AS (Natural Satin Spruce) £229
Tanglewood TW55NS (Natural) £369
Tanglewood TW45NS (Natural Cedar) £369
Tanglewood Heritage TW55 Jumbo Cutaway (Natural) £599
Tanglewood Heritage TW1000SRH Dreadnought (Natural) £699
Tanglewood Heritage TW1000SRCE Cutaway (Natural) £799
Tanglewood Heritage TW45H (Natural) £599
Tanglewood Heritage TW15H (Natural) £599
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Taylor 110E Electro Acoustic (Natural) £549
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Taylor 210E Electro Acoustic (Natural) £649
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Taylor 314CE Electro Acoustic Cutaway (Natural) £1249
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Line 6 Spider III HD150 150 watt head £258.99
Line 6 Spider III 75 75 watt combo £235
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Marshall MG15DFX 15 watt combo with effects £91
Marshall MG30DFX 30 watt with effects £129
Marshall MG15MSII 15 watt stack £159
Marshall MG50DFX 50 watt with DFX £185
Marshall MG100DFX 100 watt with Effects £235
Marshall MG100HDFX £205
Marshall MG250DFX 50/50 2x12 £255
Marshall AVT20 20 watt combo £159
Marshall AVT50H 50 watt head £200
Marshall AVT50 50 watt combo £223
Marshall AVT100 100 watt combo £302
Marshall AVT150H 150 watt head £302
Marshall AVT150 150 watt combo £339
Marshall AVT275 2x12 150watt £359
Marshall DSL401 40 watt combo £389
Marshall DSL50 50 watt valve head £499
Marshall DSL100 100 watt head £558.99
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Marshall TSL601 60 watt combo £549
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Marshall TSL100 100 watt head £639
Marshall TSL122 100 watt combo £709
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Marshall Vintage Modern 50 Watt Combo £699
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Fender 25R 25 Watt combo £115
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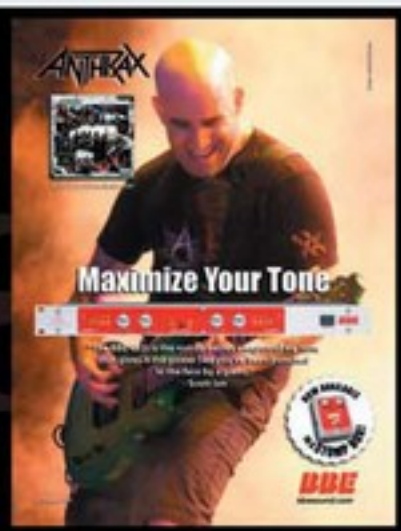

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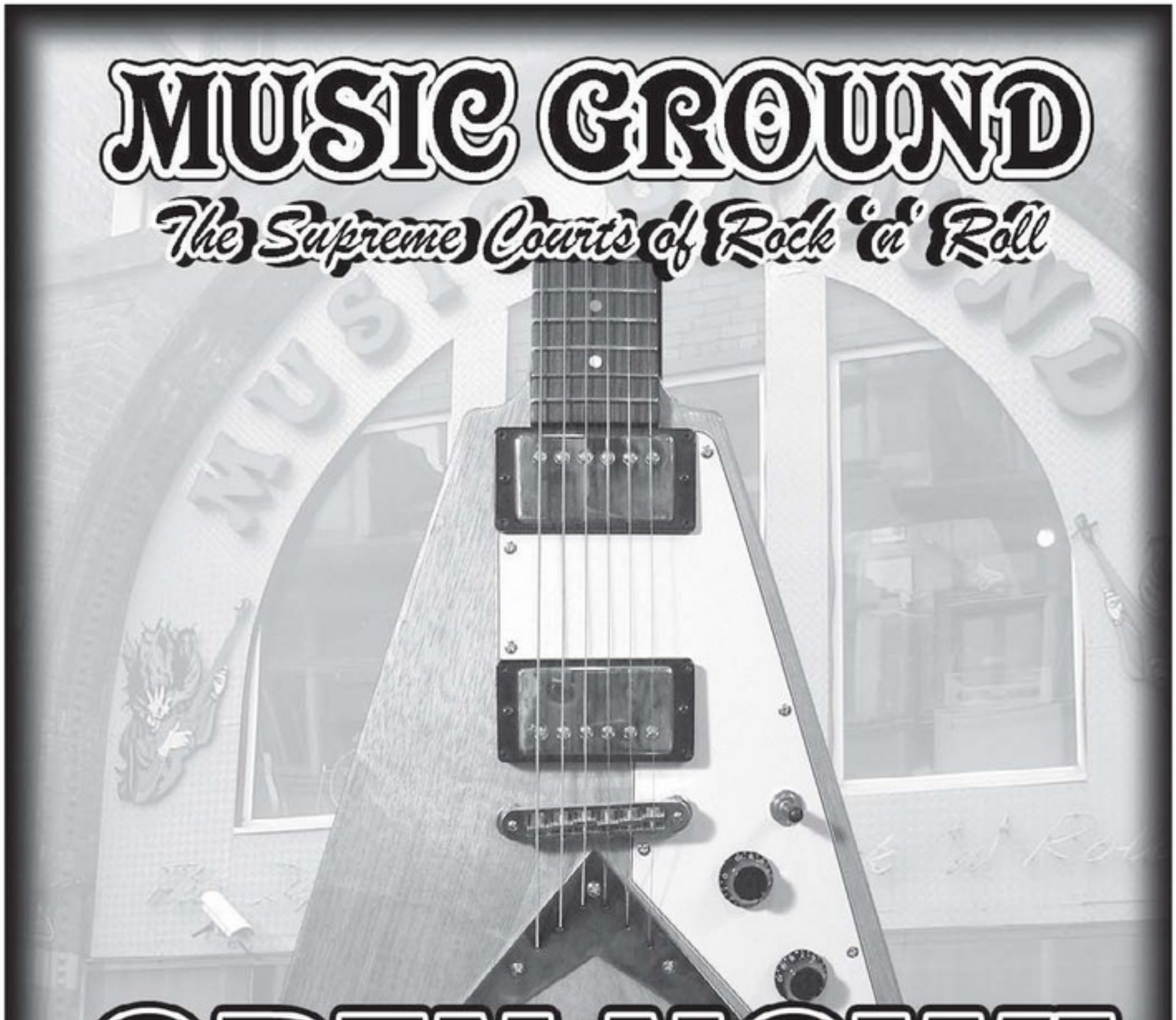

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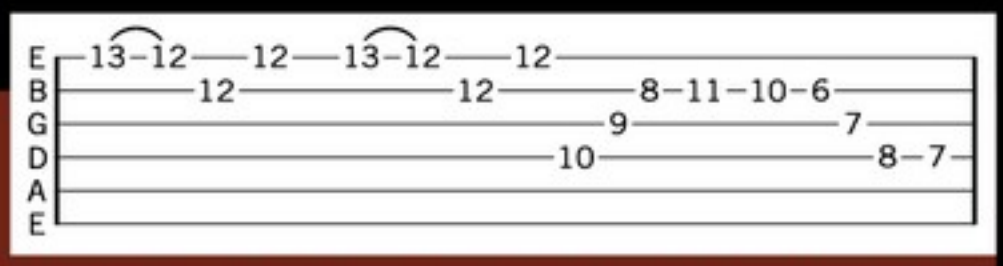

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9M0, Inst, JSM/JSM	12.30	12.90
10M0, Inst, JSM/JSM	13.15	13.75
Angled Jack/Straight Jack:		
1M0, Inst, JSM/JAM	5.60	N/A
2M0, Inst, JSM/JAM	6.45	N/A
3M0, Inst, JSM/JAM	7.30	N/A
4M5, Inst, JSM/JAM	8.60	N/A
6M0, Inst, JSM/JAM	9.90	N/A
7M5, Inst, JSM/JAM	11.20	N/A
9M0, Inst, JSM/JAM	12.50	N/A
10M0, Inst, JSM/JAM	13.35	N/A
Angled Jack/Angled Jack:		
0M2, Inst, JAM/JAM	5.10	N/A
0M3, Inst, JAM/JAM	5.20	N/A
0M5, Inst, JAM/JAM	5.40	N/A
1M0, Inst, JAM/JAM	5.80	N/A
2M0, Inst, JAM/JAM	6.65	N/A
3M0, Inst, JAM/JAM	7.50	N/A
4M5, Inst, JAM/JAM	8.80	N/A
6M0, Inst, JAM/JAM	10.10	N/A

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3M0, Inst, JSM/JSMS	10.60	N/A
4M5, Inst, JSM/JSMS	11.90	N/A
6M0, Inst, JSM/JSMS	13.20	N/A
7M5, Inst, JSM/JSMS	14.50	N/A
9M0, Inst, JSM/JSMS	15.80	N/A
10M0, Inst, JSM/JSMS	16.65	N/A
SILENT Jack/Angled Jack:		
1M0, Inst, JAM/JSMS	9.25	N/A
2M0, Inst, JAM/JSMS	8.15	N/A
3M0, Inst, JAM/JSMS	11.00	N/A
4M5, Inst, JAM/JSMS	12.30	N/A
6M0, Inst, JAM/JSMS	13.60	N/A
7M5, Inst, JAM/JSMS	14.90	N/A
9M0, Inst, JAM/JSMS	16.20	N/A
10M0, Inst, JAM/JSMS	17.05	N/A

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Straight Jack/Straight Jack:		
1M0, Spkr, JSM/JSM	5.25	5.85
2M0, Spkr, JSM/JSM	5.95	6.55
3M0, Spkr, JSM/JSM	6.65	7.25
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20M0, Spkr, JSM/JSM	18.90	19.50

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Speaker Cables - cont'd

Straight Jack/Male XLR:	STD £	CC £
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2M0, Spkr, JSM/XLRM	6.50	N/A
3M0, Spkr, JSM/XLRM	7.20	N/A
4M5, Spkr, JSM/XLRM	8.30	N/A
6M0, Spkr, JSM/XLRM	9.40	N/A
7M5, Spkr, JSM/XLRM	10.45	N/A
9M0, Spkr, JSM/XLRM	11.55	N/A
12M0, Spkr, JSM/XLRM	13.70	N/A
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20M0, Spkr, JSM/XLRM	19.45	N/A

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4M5, Mic, JSM/XLRF	8.70	9.30
6M0, Mic, JSM/XLRF	9.80	10.40
7M5, Mic, JSM/XLRF	10.90	11.50
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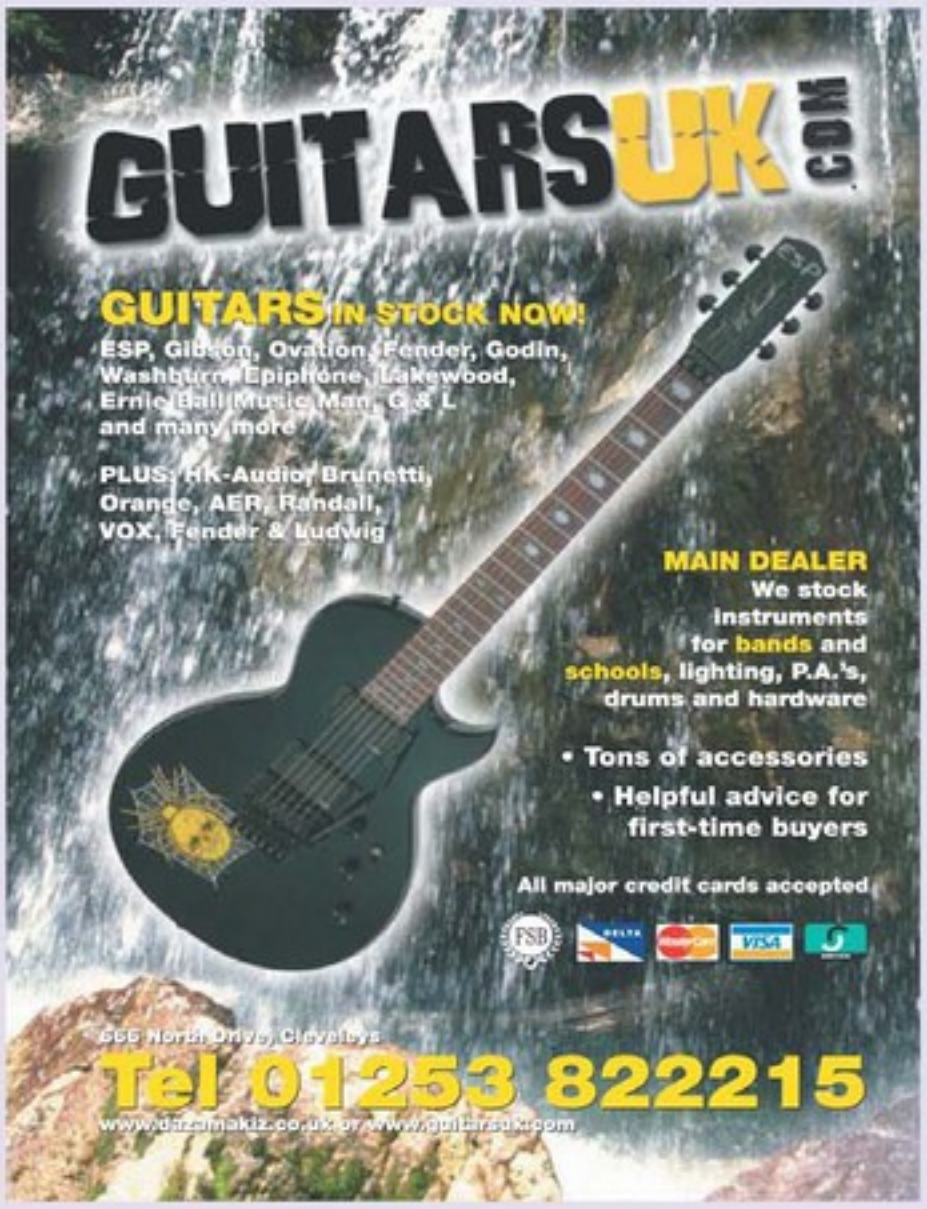

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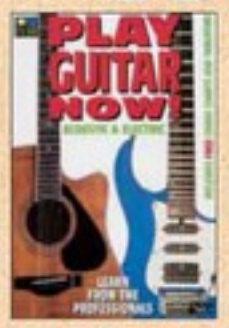

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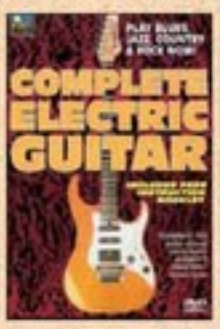

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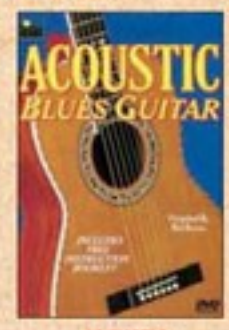

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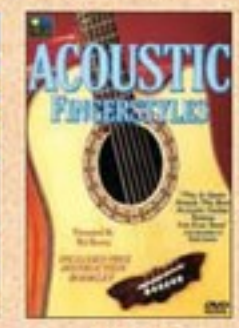

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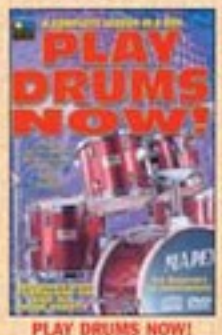

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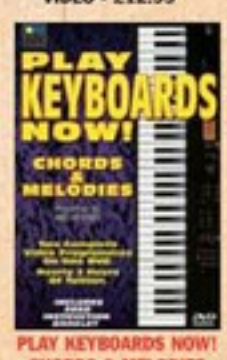

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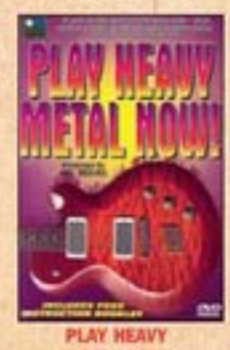

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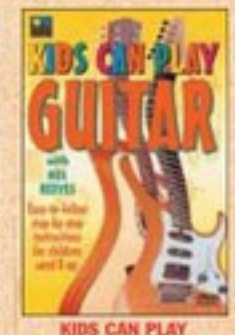

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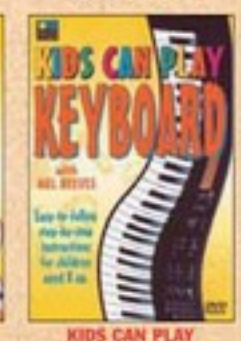

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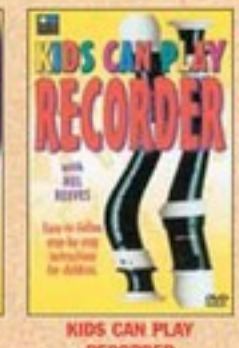

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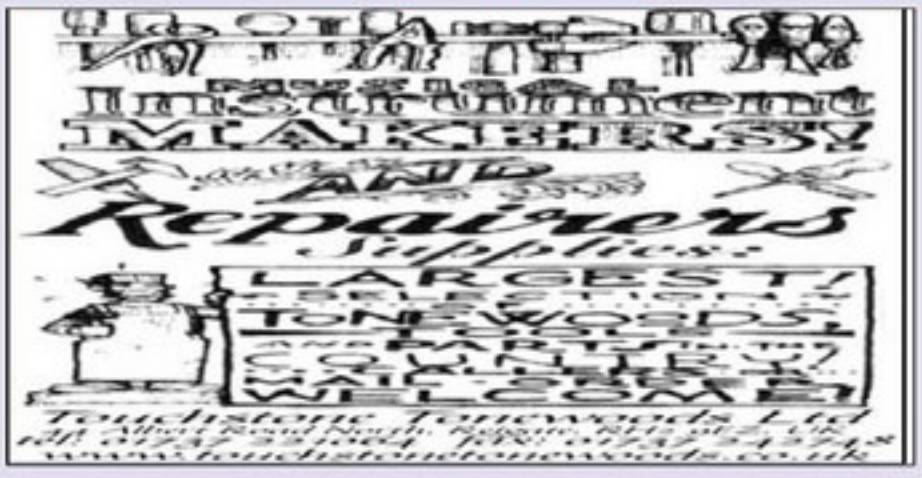

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Guyatone rhythm guitar, 1973, built in drum machine, guitar plays drum machine, needs rewiring £120, Peavey Classic 212 stereo chorus amplifier, 130 watt, as new £275 Tel: 0161 682 7134 (Manchester) [EF]

Fender Stratocaster guitar, made in USA, rosewood neck, lovely guitar, price £450. Tel: 07947 279913; contact e-mail: mailstuff200-mm@yahoo.com (London) [EF]

Music Man Stingray bass guitar, four- string 2006, natural ash body, maple neck, three-band EQ, home use only, as new condition, Music Man case, plays and sounds amazing £900 ono. Tel: 01253 876720 (Lancs) [EF]

Tokai Love Rock Les Paul, flame top, Korean model, two years old, as new condition with gig bag £250 ono Tel: 07858 067380 [EF]

Marshall 2x12" early seventies Chequerboard cab, all original £250, Vintage Fender Champ, early seventies, 6W valve practice amp, point to point circuitry original, good condition £400 Tel: 01985 218798 [EF]

Gitane DG250m Gypsy Jazz guitar, still boxed £500, Laney 1968 Supergroup 60 watt head, recently serviced by SA Amps £500 Tel: 01985 218798 [BC]

Custom Sound Cub 30 tube, valve amp, excellent condition £75, Roland GP16 guitar processor £150, Zoom 4040 effects unit as new, still in box £175 Tel: 0161 682 7134 (Manchester) [FG]

Carlsbro Mantis Multi effect echo unit etc £175 ono Tel: 01526 354597 (Lincs) [FG]

Fender Stratocaster, made in USA, rosewood neck, lovely instrument, price £450 Tel: 07947 279913 – email: mailstuff200-mm@yahoo.com (London) [EF]

Gretsch, rare historic series 3967, goldtop, single cutaway, single coil, pickup, rosewood pick fretboard, 20 extra frets 'G' tailpiece £750 offers Tel: 07732 421382 [FG]

Martin 000-28 1931 serial no. 47441, an opportunity to purchase an historic Martin guitar, please telephone for detailed résumé, private sale, unfortunately forced through illness, call Alan on 020 8647 6376 (Surrey) [FG]

Guild F65CE AAA spruce top blond single cutaway, gorgeous curly maple back, sides and neck Fishman electriconics £1350 ono, Peavey acoustic 112 £360 ono, P/X considered, W.H.Y. Tel: 01903 261438/07985 264364 [FG]

ESP EC-50, black, brand new, 3-way pick-up selector and tone controls, comes with Rittor gig bag £250 ono Tel: 07747 613402 [FG]

Fender Stratocaster Classic Series '62, re-issue Olympic white, absolutely immaculate with gig bag £295 Tel: Geoff 0121 3582704 [FG]

Gibson ES-335 Vintage sunburst, 2005, Bareknuckle Mississippi Queen S/C pickups, professional setup, excellent

condition, cased £1300, email: andy@agl.me.uk for photos Tel: 01424 774389 [FG]

D'Angelico New Yorker as new, original super deluxe hard case £2500, String Bass 1/2 size, new with cover and bow, (cost £700) £350 Tel: Bill 01252 320129 [FG]

Fender Jaquar made in Japan rosewood fingerboard vintage, white, year old, home use only, including gig bag, mint condition £350 ono, pics available, call Nick on 07889 622042 [FG]

Kramer USA 1980 Super Strat type guitar, genuine Floyd, Rose, three humbuckers, switchable S.C. fantastic tone, action and condition, the ultimate rock guitar includes case, absolute bargain £275 Tel: 01485 448767 [FG]

Gibson ES5 switchmaster, 1998, 3 humbuckers, Gibson case £3250, Gibson 1961 ES350T, sunburst, Florentine cutaway, v. rare, non original case, Waverley tuners £3750 Tel: 020 8270 3924 [FG]

Music Man Stingray four-string and five-string bass guitars, excellent condition, hi-res photos available on request, located in Hampshire but can deliver anywhere in UK or Europe, email: david@value21.co.uk or Tel: 07739 314261 [FG]

Fender Clapton Strat, pewter £895, Knopfler Strat £995, Boogie Mark 1 hardwood re-issue £1550, Fender Blues Junior £285, Vox AC30 re-issue, English, Greenbacks £650 Tel: 01986 894424 (Suffolk) [FG]

Bill Wyman Teardrop bass, excellent condition, complete with case, special provenance price expected £700 contact e-mail: walter@pikehill.f9.co.uk [FG]

Gibson Les Paul Special double cutaway, faded series, TV yellow, vgc, comes with hard case, £430, Tel 01226 713538 [FG]

Kustom 36 Coupe, 36 watt all-valve combo, great tone, as new condition with Kustom amp cover, footswitch, manual etc. £475. Tel 01226 713538 [FG]

WANTED

Blues guitarist and teacher seeks new life overseas Tel: 07854 867628 [EF]

Lead guitar player and bass player aged 20 each, seek a drummer and rhythm guitarist/ singer, around Buckinghamshire area must like classic rock/metal, email: thenumberofthebeast86@hotmail.com Tel: 01844 273884 [EF]

Ibanez Jem 7 VWH 2000 onwards, must be good condition, cash waiting Tel: 07821 389013 (eves/weekends) [EF]

Autistic Sounds project, requires the services of an elastic fingered bass player, sensitive hardhitting drummer, as well as others to perform original brain bursting noises, contact Harry on 0161 2809394 or email: davidmorrishind@cwctv (Bury, Bolton, Central Manchester area) [FG]

Rackmount Stereo Flanger or Phaser wanted, eg. Bel BF-20, Roland, Ams, TC Electronics 12-10 Eventide or similar Tel: 01482 448767 [FG]

Brain of Legerdemain Worm, influenced by Buckethead, The Residents and Les Claypool from Primus, seeks guitar player for band, album and stop motion horror movie project, Cambridge based. Interested? Then stop reading this and text Zak on 07990 947201 [FG]

Looking for any electric guitar made in 1968, condition not important but must be all-original as it is for a 40th birthday present next year. If you have anything, email: seanrpage@hotmail.com [FG]

Did anybody record the "Ry Cooder is 60" radio programme, 8pm till 9pm on Saturday 24th Feb 2007? on audio tape, any chance of a copy, expenses paid. Tel: 01597 823771 [FG]

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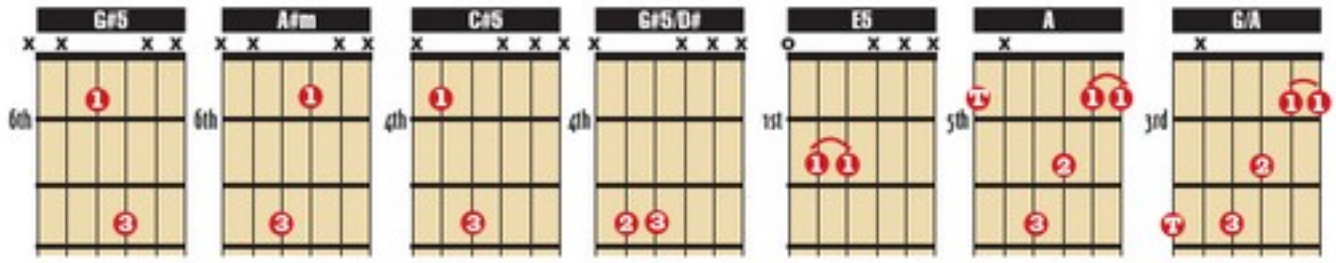

XTC

Senses Working Overtime

This arrangement of XTC's perky yet deceptively dark 1982 single distils the acoustic guitar and electric parts into one, and could be played on either acoustic or clean-toned electric. The first two choruses are in the key of E major; the third and final chorus is in the key of F major after the song has modulated up a semitone. The second half of each verse involves some quirky riffing on acoustic guitar, simplified here into the chords shown.

Senses Working Overtime

4/4 Time; BPM = 130

INTRO:
G#5 / A#m / | G#5 / A#m / | G#5 / A#m / | G#5 / A#m / ||

VERSE 1:
G#5 A#m G#5 A#m G#5 A#m
Hey, hey, the clouds are whey, there's straw for the donkeys
G#5 A#m C#5 G#5/D# E5 G#5/D#
And the innocents can all sleep safe- ly
C#5 G#5/D# E5 G#5/D# C#5 G#5/D# E5 G#5/D# C#5 G#5/D#
All sleep safe- ly
E5 G#5/D#
G#5 A#m G#5 A#m G#5 A#m
My, my, the sun is pie, there's fodder for the cannons
G#5 A#m C#5 G#5/D# E5 G#5/D#
And the guilty ones can all sleep safe- ly
C#5 G#5/D# E5 G#5/D# C#5 G#5/D# E5 G#5/D# C#5 G#5/D#
All sleep safe- ly
E5 G#5/D#

PRECHORUS 1:
A G/A A G/A
And all the world is football-shaped / It's just for me to kick in
B A/B B
space / And I can see, hear, smell, touch, taste

CHORUS 1:
E B E NC A E
And I've got one, two, three, four, five / Senses working o- ver-
B A B E B E B E
time / Trying to take this all in / I've got one, two, three, four, five /
NC A E B A B
Senses working o- ver- time / Trying to taste the difference
A B A B
'Tween a lemon and lime, pain and pleasure /
E
And the church bells softly chime **LINK (SAME AS INTRO):**

VERSE 2:
G#5 A#m G#5 A#m G#5 A#m
Hey, hey, night fights day, there's food for the thinkers
G#5 A#m C#5 G#5/D# E5 G#5/D#
And the innocents can all live slow- ly
C#5 G#5/D# E5 G#5/D# C#5 G#5/D# E5 G#5/D# C#5 G#5/D#
All live slow- ly
E5 G#5/D#
G#5 A#m G#5 A#m G#5 A#m
My, my, the sky will cry, jewels for the thirsty
G#5 A#m C#5 G#5/D# E5 G#5/D#
And the guilty ones can all die slow- ly
C#5 G#5/D# E5 G#5/D# C#5 G#5/D# E5 G#5/D# C#5 G#5/D#
All die slow- ly
E5 G#5/D#

PRECHORUS 2:
A G/A A G/A B
And all the world is biscuit-shaped / It's just for me to feed my face
A/B B
And I can see, hear, smell, touch, taste **REPEAT CHORUS 1**

BRIDGE: A / G / | A / G / | A / G / | A / G / ||
A G A G A G A G
And birds might fall from black skies (Wo-oo-oo)
A G A G A G A G
And bullies might give you black eyes (Wo-oo-oo)
A G A G A G A G
And buses might skid on black ice (Wo-oo-oo)
A G A G D A D A D
But to me they're very, very bea-uti-ful
Bb F Bb F Bb D A D A D
(England's glory!) / Bea-uti-ful /

Bb F Bb F Bb
(A striking beauty!)
D
Doo-doo-doo-doo, doo-doo-doo-doo, doo, doo-doo
Bb
Doo-doo-doo-doo, doo-doo-doo-doo, doo, doo-doo
D
Doo-doo-doo-doo, doo-doo-doo-doo, doo, doo-doo
Bb F
Doo-doo-doo-doo, doo, doo-doo-doo-doo

PRECHORUS 3:
Bb Ab/Bb Bb Ab/Bb C
And all the world is football-shaped / It's just for me to kick in space
Bb/C C
/ And I can see, hear, smell, touch, taste

CHORUS 3:
F C F NC Bb F
And I've got one, two, three, four, five / Senses working o- ver-
C Bb C F C F C F
time / Trying to take this all in / I've got one, two, three, four, five /
NC Bb F C Bb C
Senses working o- ver- time / Trying to tell the difference
Bb C Bb C F
'Tween the goods and crimes, dirt and treasure / And there's one,
C F NC Bb F C Bb
two, three, four, five / Senses working o- ver- time / Trying to
C F C F C F NC
take this all in / I've got one, two, three, four, five / Senses working
Bb F C Bb C Bb
o- ver- time / Trying to taste the difference / 'Tween a lemon and
C Bb C F
lime, pain and pleasure / And the church bells softly chime

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Hanks is the UK's No.1 acoustic store, specialising in guitars, banjos, mandolins, ukuleles, strings, amplification and a wide range of accessories.

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The Bass Cellar offers London's largest selection of new, used and vintage bass guitars and amplification. With brands such as Gibson, Fender, Tokai, Rickenbacker, Tobias, Warwick, Music man, Hartke, Gallien Kruger and Ampeg the selection is second to none.

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Music Ground is London's leading stockists of boutique pedals including Keely, Fulltone, Z-Vex, Electro-Harmonix, T-Rex and many more! The store stocks a full range of pedal board accessories including power supplies, and custom made patch cables. The shop hosts London's finest selection of vintage guitars and amplification.

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Rhodes Music has been serving the public for almost 15 years. With a comprehensive stock of hundreds of different styles, shapes and models of guitars the store is guaranteed to have something for everyone being the largest stockist of Gibsons in the West End! Rhodes also has a large selection of guitar amps: Marshall, Orange, Hughes & Kettner, Peavey and Hiwatt.

REGENT SOUNDS

This store is situated in the original Regent Sound Studio where the Rolling Stones and many more bands cut their first discs. It is Europe's largest Fender dealer with over 200 models available. Other brands to be found there include: Gretsch, Music Man, Squier, Vox, Tokai, Hofner, Danelectro and many many more...

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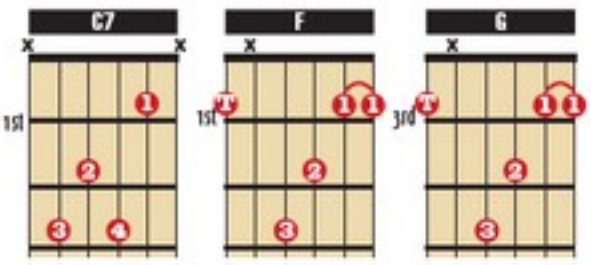
Donovan

Sunshine Superman

Photo: Brigitte Engl/Redferns

In order to play this at the same pitch as Donovan's original version, place a capo at the first fret so the chords sound a semitone higher, in the key of C# rather than in C. More recent live performances of *Sunshine Superman* show Donovan performing the song without a capo and in the key of D using chords D7, G and A; simply move the given chord shapes two frets higher. Thus, these performances sound a semitone higher than the original. Alternatively, Donovan may have performed the original using these D7, G and A chords but tuned down by a semitone – it's impossible to say conclusively from the recording.



Sunshine Superman

4/4 Time; BPM = 132 capo 1st Fret

INTRO:
NC (C7) / / / | (C7) / / / | (C7) / / / | (C7) / / / |
C7 / / / | C7 / / / | C7 / / / | C7 / / / ||

VERSE 1:
(C7)
Sunshine came softly a-through my a-window today

Could've tripped out easy a-but I've a-changed my ways
F
It'll take time, I know it, but in a while
C7
You're gonna be mine, I know it, we'll do it in style

CHORUS 1:
G F
'Cause I made my mind up you're going to be mine

I'll tell you right now

VERSE 2:
C7
Any trick in the book now, baby, all that I can find

Superman or Green Lantern ain't got a-nothin' on me

I can make like a turtle and dive for a-pearls in the sea
F
A-you can just sit there thinking on your velvet throne, yes
C7
About all the rainbows a-you can a-have for your own

CHORUS 2:
G F
'Cause I made my mind up you're going to be mine

I'll tell you right now

VERSE 3:
C7
Any trick in the book now, baby, all that I can find

Everybody's hustlin' a-just to have a little scene

When I say we'll be cool I think that you know what I mean
F
We stood on a beach at sunset, do you remember when?
C7
I know a beach where, baby, a-it never ends

CHORUS 3:
G F
When you've made your mind up for-ever to be mine

Hmm, hmm, hmm, hmm
C7
I'll pick up your hand and slowly blow your little mind
G F
'Cause I made my mind up you're going to be mine

I'll tell you right now
C7
Any trick in the book now, baby, all that I can find

GUITAR SOLO:
C7 / / / | C7 / / / | C7 / / / | C7 / / / |
C7 / / / | C7 / / / | C7 / / / | C7 / / / |
F / / / | F / / / | F / / / | F / / / |
C7 / / / | C7 / / / | C7 / / / | C7 / / / |
G / / / | G / / / | F / / / | F / / / |
C7 / / / | C7 / / / | C7 / / / | C7 / / / ||

VERSE 4:
(C7)
Superman or Green Lantern ain't got a-nothin' on me

I can make like a turtle and dive for your pearls in the sea, yup
F
A-you-you-you can just sit there, well, thinkin' on your velvet throne
C7
About all the rainbows a-you can a-have for your own

CHORUS 4:
G F
When you've made your mind up for-ever to be mine

Hmm, hmm, hmm, hmm, hmm
C7
I'll pick up your hand and slowly blow your little mind

G F
When you've made your mind up for-ever to be mine

I'll pick up your hand
C7
I'll pick up your hand and slowly blow your little mind

OUTRO (with vocal ad-libs):
C7 / / / | C7 / / / | C7 / / / | C7 / / / | C7 / / / || (fades out)

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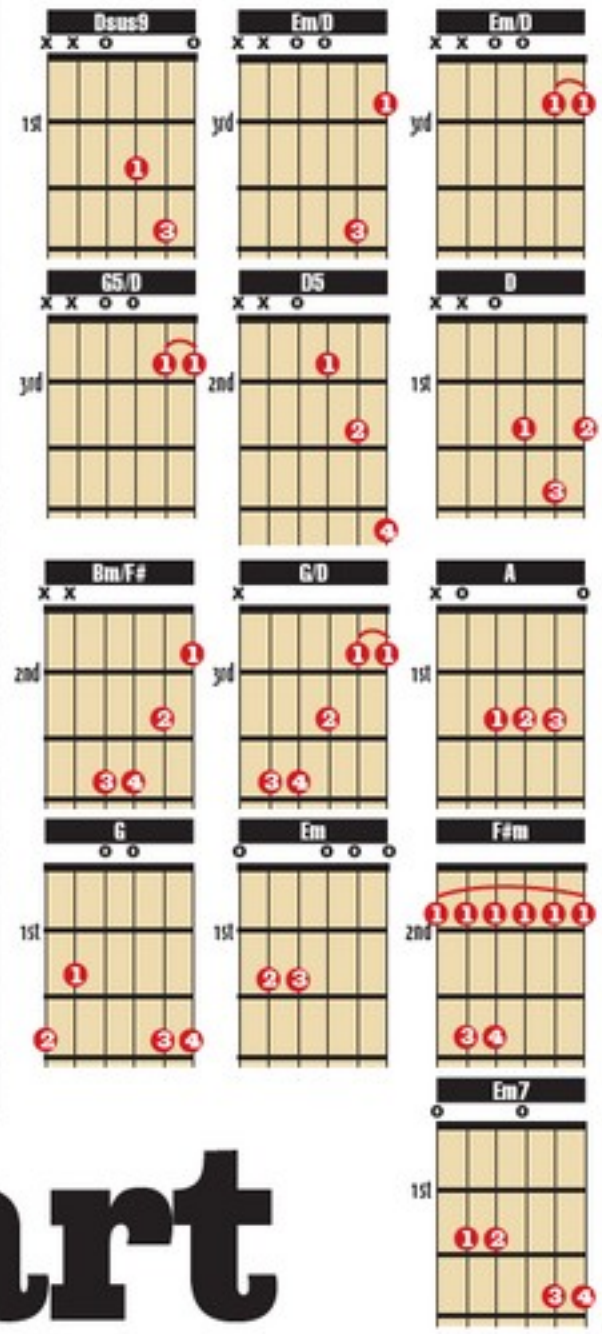
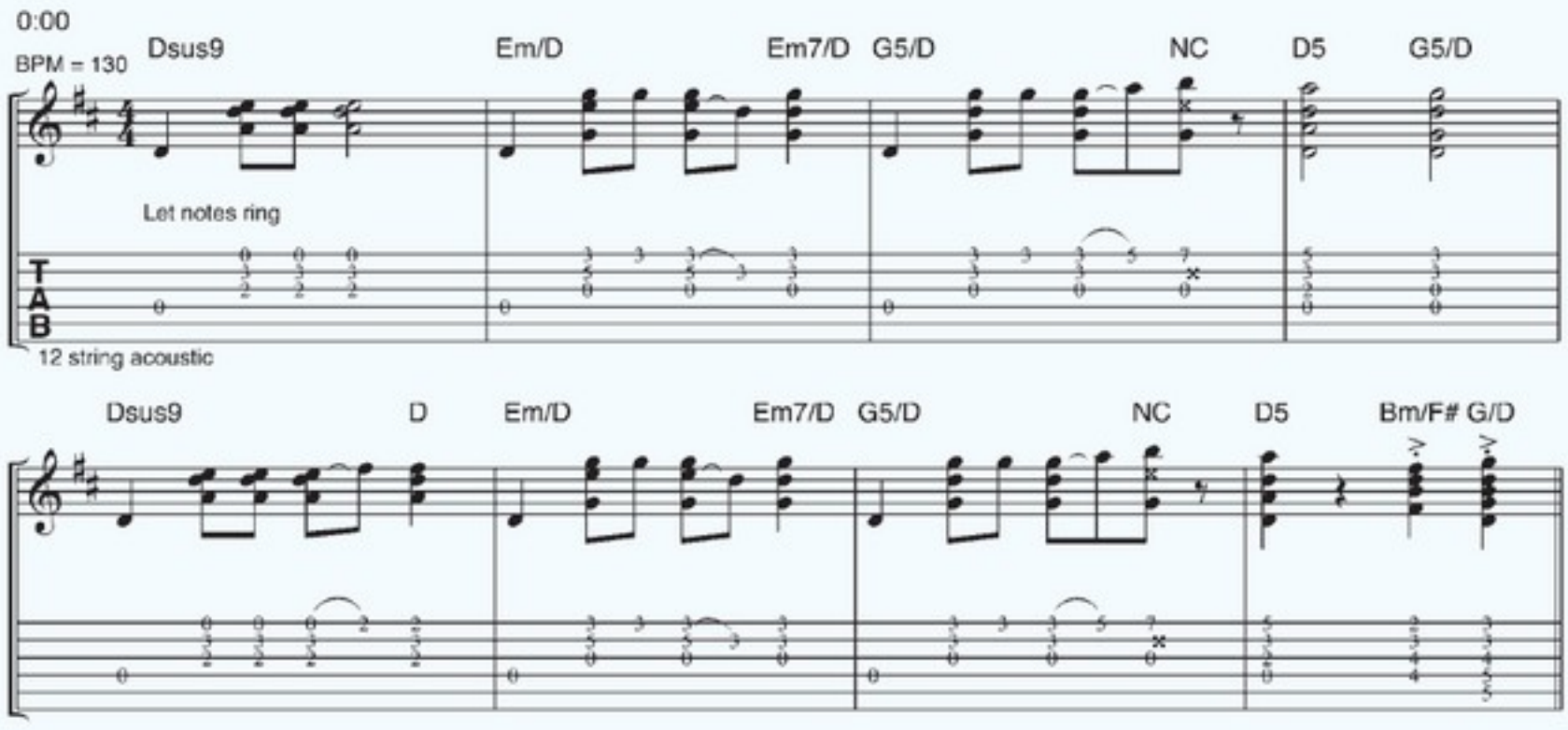
Rod Stewart



Maggie May

This version of Rod's genius rite-of-passage song *Maggie May* is taken from *Best Of Rod Stewart*, and it omits the nylon-string intro from the *Every Picture Tells A Story* version. The first excerpt shows the 12-string acoustic intro, found at 0:31 in the longer one. Note the voicing of Em7/D in this context is the same shape as the voicing for G5/D. The second excerpt shows the first guitar solo, starting at 2:28 in the edited version. The second guitar solo carries on for three bars into the mandolin solo.

Maggie May — INTRO



Maggie May

4/4 Time; BPM = 130

INTRO:

Dsus9 / / / | Em/D / / Em7/D | G5/D / / NC | D5 / G5/D / / |
Dsus9 / / D | Em/D / / Em7/D | G5/D / / NC | D5 / Bm/F# G/D ||

VERSE 1:

A G D
Wake up Maggie, I think I got something to say to you
A G D
It's late September and I really should be back at school
G D G A
I know I keep you amused but I feel I'm being used
Em F#m Em Dsus9
Oh Maggie I couldn't have tried any more
Em A Em A
You led me away from home just to save you from being a-lone
Em A D
You stole my heart and that's what really hurt

VERSE 2:

A G D
The morning sun, when it's in your face really shows your age
A G D
But that don't worry me none in my eyes you're ev'- rything
G D G A
I laughed at all of your jokes, my love you didn't need to coax
Em F#m Em Dsus9
Oh, Maggie I couldn't have tried any more
Em A Em A
You led me away from home, just to save you from being a-lone
Em A G D
You stole my soul and that's a pain I can do without

VERSE 3:

A G D
All I needed was a friend to lend a guiding hand
A G D
But you turned into a lover and mother, what a lover, you wore me out
G D
All you did was wreck my bed
G A
And in the morning kicked me in the head
Em F#m Em Dsus9
Oh Maggie I couldn't have tried any more
Em A Em A
You led me away from home 'cause you didn't want to be a-lone
Em A G D
You stole my heart, I couldn't leave you if I tried

SOLO:

Em7 / / / | A / / / | D / / / | G / / / |
Em / / D | G / / / | D / / / | D / / / ||

VERSE 4:

A G D
I suppose I could coll-ect my books and get on back to school
A G D
Or steal my daddy's cue and make a living out of playing pool
G D G A
Or find myself a rock and roll band that needs a helpin' hand
Em F#m Em Dsus9
Oh Maggie I wish I'd never seen your face
Em A
You made a first-class fool out of me
Em A
But I'm as blind as a fool can be
Em A G D
You stole my heart but I love you anyway

GUITAR SOLO 2:

Em7 / / / | A / / / | D / / / | G / / / |
Em / / D | G / / / | D / / / | D / / / |
Em7 / / / | A / / / | D / / / | G / / / |
Em / / / | G / / / ||

MANDOLIN SOLO:

||: D / / / | Em7/D / / / | G5/D / / NC | D / / / :|| 5 times

OUTRO:

D Em7/D G5/D NC D
Maggie I wish I'd never seen your face

D / / / | Em7/D / / / | G5/D / / / | D / / / |
I'll
Em7/D G5/D NC D Em7/D
get on back home one of these days, woo, hoo [fade out]

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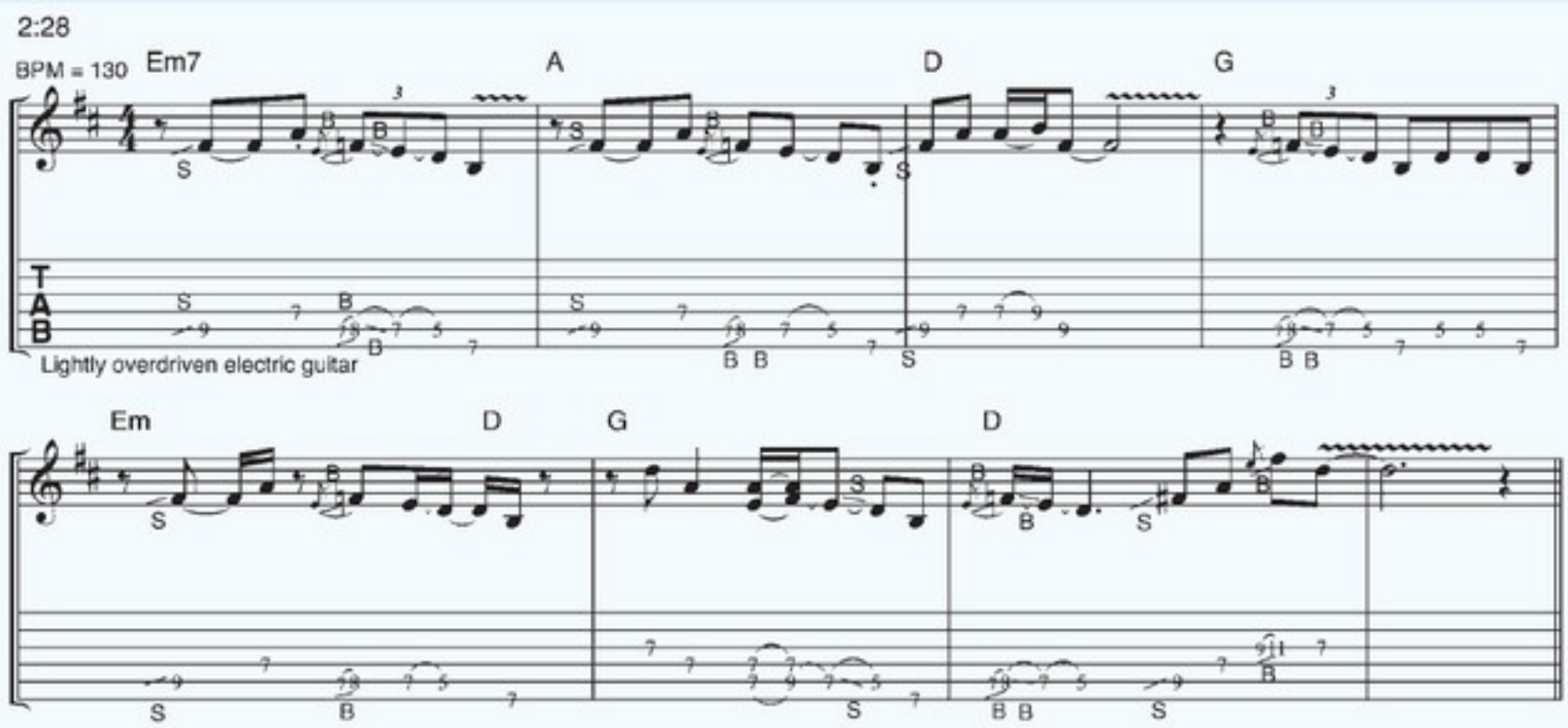
Maggie May

SOLO

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James Burton

Techniques Workshop

If you don't know James Burton, you don't know rock'n'roll guitar. Douglas Noble picks apart the licks that drove a hundred hits

James Burton provided the twang for Elvis, Jerry Lee Lewis, Ricky Nelson, Gram Parsons and many, many more, and it's only right that in this Telecaster-lovin' issue we honour a man who's probably done more with the instrument than anyone in its history.

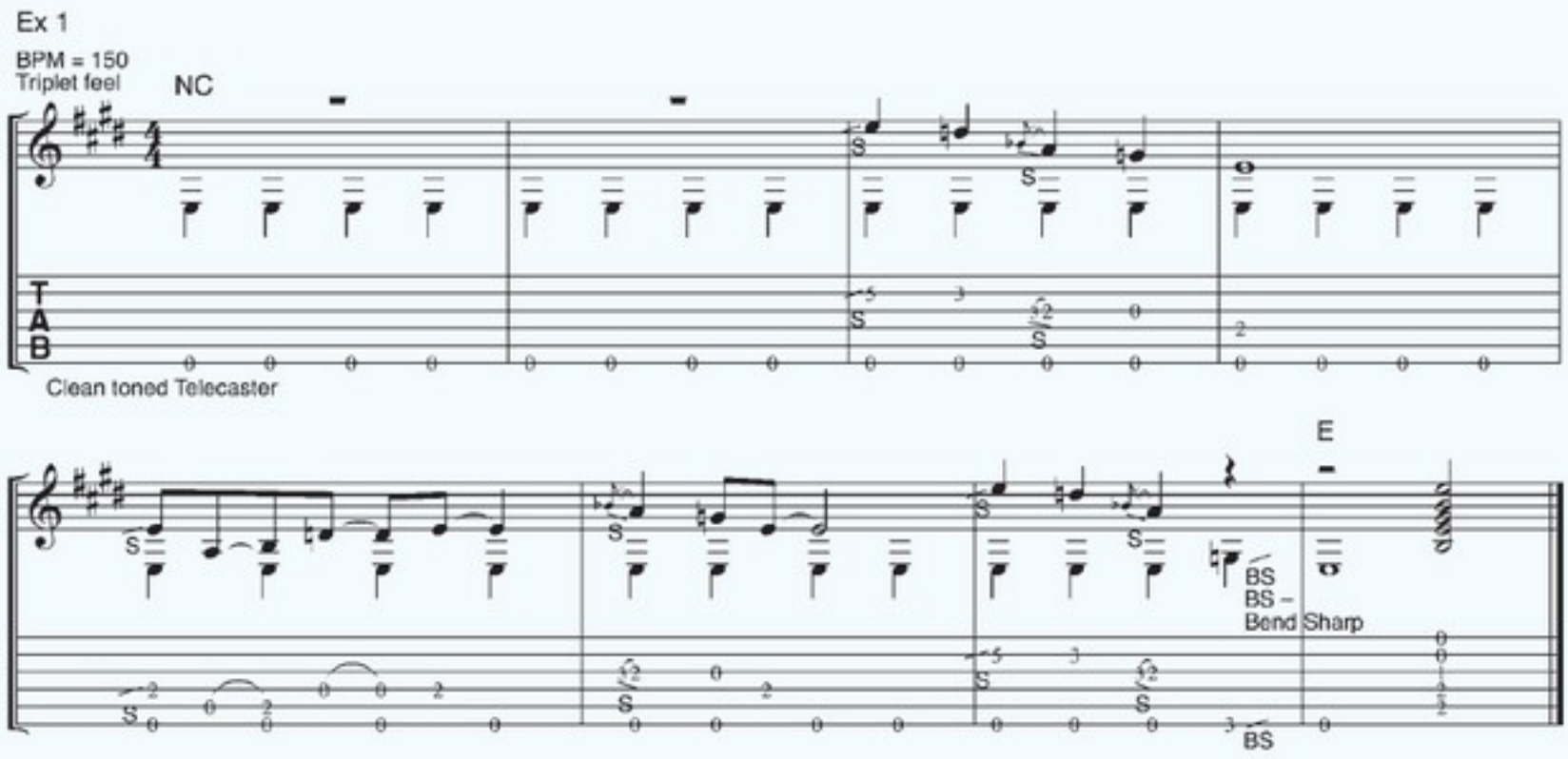
'I really got into guitars when I was 11 or 12 years old,' James Burton told *Guitar & Bass* in June 1992. 'I was into country music and rhythm and blues and guitarists like Chet Atkins – he was one of my favourites. Then I got into the blues thing with Chuck Berry, Lightnin' Hopkins, Bo Diddley and Elmore James, that type of thing, and it just progressed from there. I started playing guitar and getting into it real heavy at age 13. I actually went professional when I was 14 and it just progressed from there... I recorded my first record when I was 15. That was *Suzie Q* with Dale Hawkins.'

Burton enjoyed a long career as a first-call sideman, recording and performing with many other top artists including Ricky Nelson, Glen Campbell, Dean Martin, Bobby Darin, The Everly Brothers, Johnny Cash, Frank Sinatra and Elvis Presley. He fused his country and blues influences via an idiosyncratic picking technique, as heard in the aforementioned *Suzie Q* (for which Burton also wrote the guitar riff). 'With *Suzie Q* I liked to play the finger pick and straight pick with the rhythm and the bass strings at the same time – it gives you a different effect and a different sound,' he revealed. Burton holds a plectrum between the thumb and index finger and wears a metal fingerpick on his middle finger; this enables him to play bass notes on the lower strings on the downbeat and licks on the upper strings using the middle finger. Occasionally he also plucks strings with the ring finger of the right hand. In order to get the sound he wanted Burton had to use lighter banjo strings on guitar.

Exercises 1 and 2 both explore Burton's characteristic plectrum-and-fingerpicking technique, as heard on *Suzie Q*. A big fan of country music, Burton incorporated pedal steel-type bends into his playing via slides and bends, and we'll look at these in Exercises 3, 4, 5 and 6. Chet Atkins was a major influence on Burton's technique, and we've illustrated this in Exercises 7 and 8.

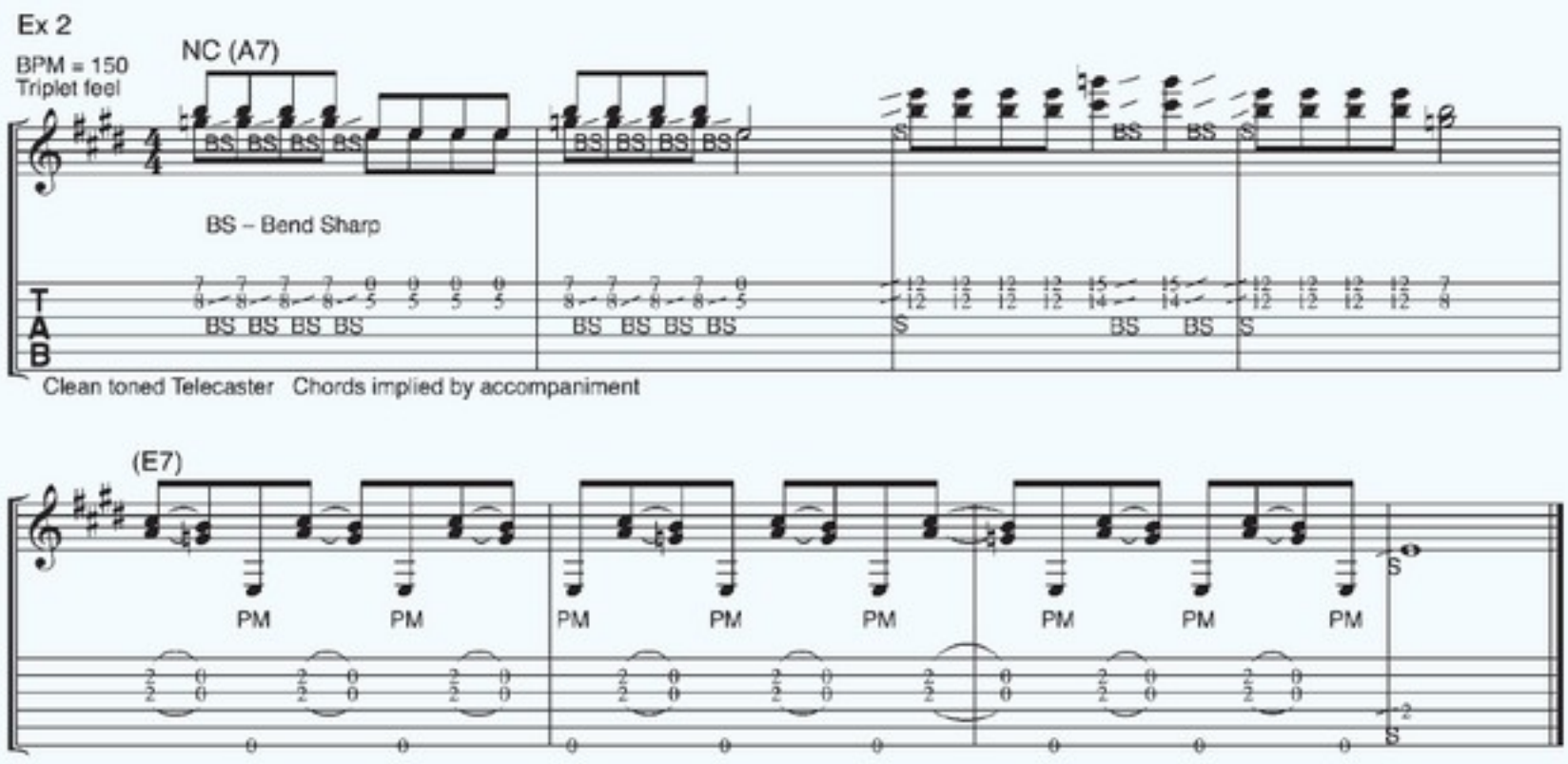
In order to get close to Burton's sound and style these exercises are best performed with the plectrum held between thumb and index finger and a metal fingerpick on the middle finger – and played, of course, on a clean-toned Tele. But even without adopting the Burton method – these examples could be played purely with the fingers – there's much that can be learned from his style.

Ex 1: Suzie Q picking technique

4/4 Time

This exercise is a mini lesson in Burton's picking technique via the intro and verses of Dale Hawkins' *Suzie Q*. Getting off to an easy start with a bass note plucked with the plectrum on the beat in bars 1 and 2, this bass part is continued in bars 3 and 4 with the addition of a melody on the upper strings, also played solely on the beat: pluck this treble string melody with the middle finger. Bars five and six are the trickiest as they bring upbeat quavers into the upper melody. Bar 5 also involves hammering-on in the upper part onto the beat at the same time as striking a bass note; this will feel alien at first and may require slow practise until the coordination is achieved. Bars 7 and 8 round the exercise off with a bluesy 'Bend Sharp' on the bottom string and an E chord. Practise the whole exercise slowly, gradually working up to speed, and remember it's played with a triplet feel. Once the exercise is running smoothly, try lightly damping the bottom string with the palm of the plucking hand; this creates a contrast in tone between the low notes and the high notes.

Ex 2: Suzie Q double stops

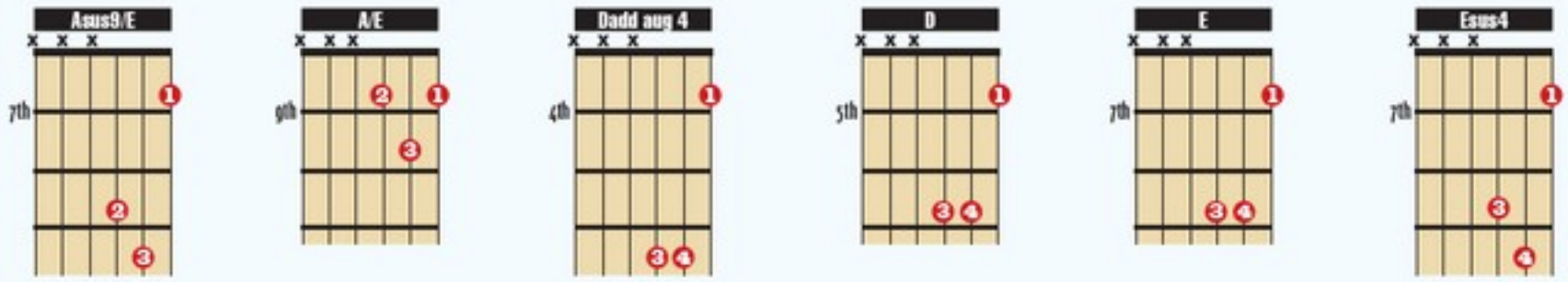
4/4 Time



The first four bars of Burton's solo in *Suzie Q* uses Chuck Berry-style double stops, as in the first four bars of the exercise above. Strike these double stops with the plectrum. In bars five to eight use middle and ring fingers to pluck the double stops on strings three and two and pluck the bottom string with the plectrum, which is held between thumb and index finger. Bars 5 to 7 involve a double pull-off from the double stop at the second fret – a pull-off from the second fret on both strings two and three to the respective open strings. Make sure the pull-off can be heard on both strings. The bottom string in bars 5 to 7 is palm-muted, indicated by 'PM'.

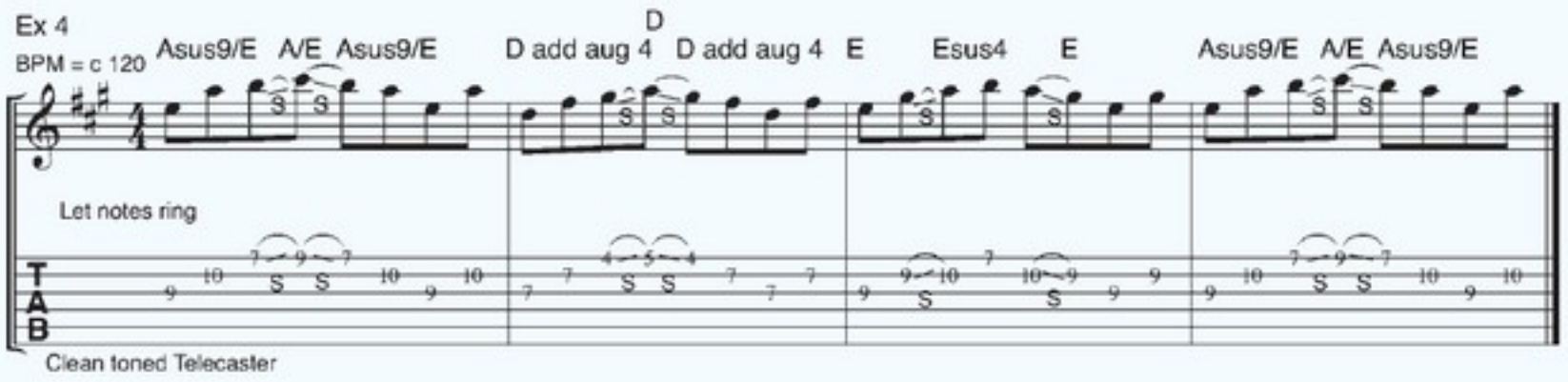
Ex 3: Three-note chords on the top three strings

4/4 Time



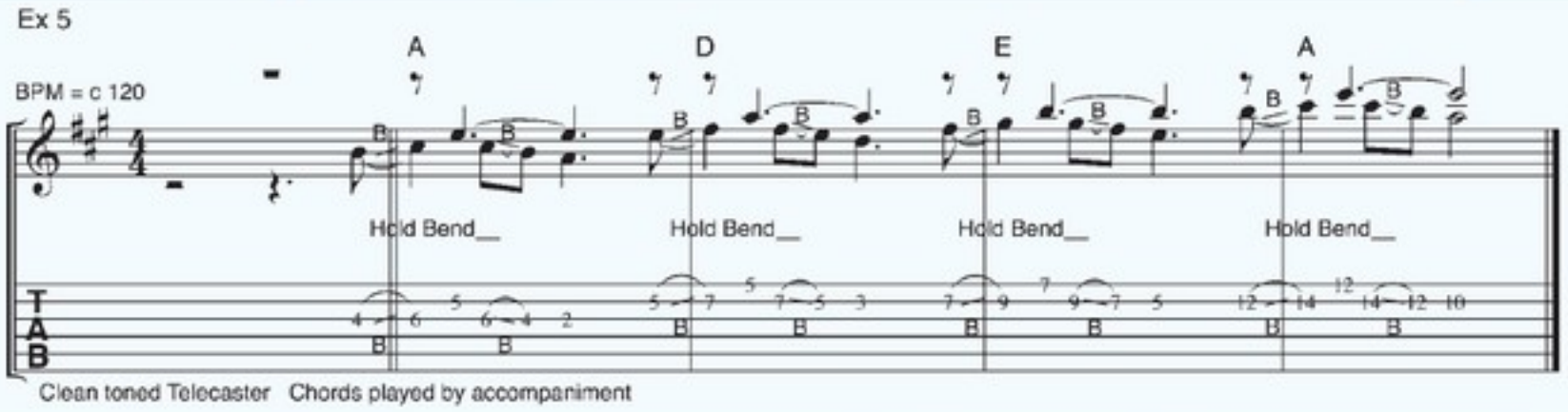
These three-note chords of Asus9/E, A/E, D add aug 4, D, E and Esus4 chords may seem to be fingered in a most peculiar manner, but it's vital for the pedal steel-type licks that use these chord voicings in Exercise 4. Both Asus9/E and Dadd9aug4 involve a certain amount of stretching, which can be made easier with a slight alteration of the position of the thumb at the back of the neck.

Ex 4: Pedal steel-type licks with slides

4/4 Time

Burton occasionally creates pedal steel-type licks with slides. Use the chord voicings from Exercise 3, and make sure the notes can ring on by holding down the shapes as long as you can. When sliding with the first finger on the top string in bars 1, 2 and 4 and sliding with the pinky or fourth finger on the second string in bar 3, try to make sure the other fingers remain as unaffected as possible.

Ex 5: Pedal steel-type licks with bends

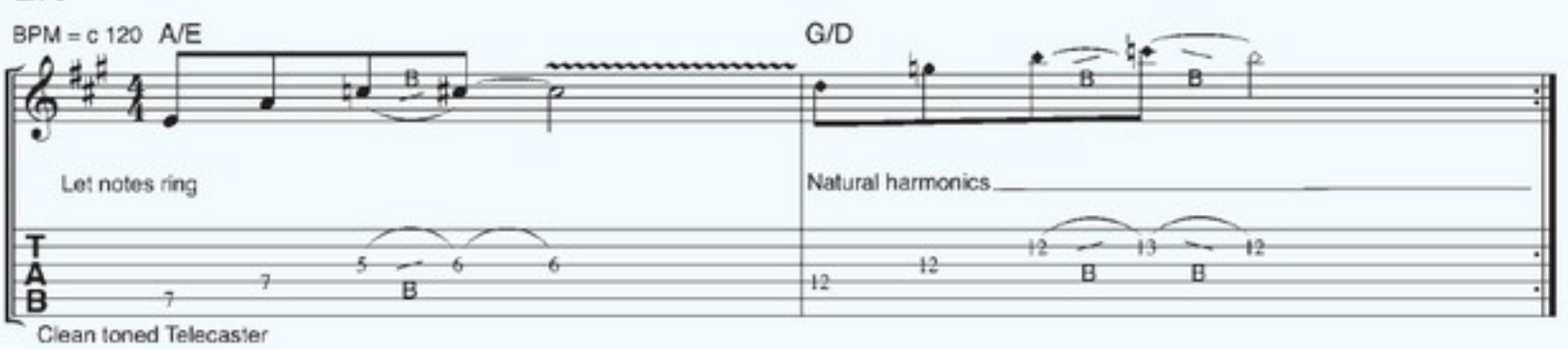
4/4 Time



Burton also adds a pedal steel-flavour via bends. This lick follows a I, IV, V progression in the key of A, bending from the major second degree of the chord to the major third then striking the fifth on the next higher adjacent string. Make sure the upper note lasts for the notated value, and that the lower note is sustained while the upper note is struck (indicated by 'Hold Bend') then bent down.

Ex 6: Unconventional Bends

4/4 Time



Two great country bends here. For bar 1, use fingers three and four on strings five and four, and then use the first finger to pull the third string down, raising it by one semitone. In bar 2 a G/D triad is played using the natural harmonics at the 12th fret, then the harmonic on the second string is bent by pushing the string down behind the nut, raising it by a semitone, then releasing it again.

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Bent Out Of Shape: Burton's Banjo String Trick

James Burton has always mainly used Telecasters, right from the start of his career. His first Tele was a '53, a gift from his parents, originally blonde but refinished over the years in several shades of red; in the late '60s he moved to a Paisley Telecaster, which Elvis loved. 'The Fender guitar, for me, that's it,' he informed us in April 2001. 'I love the feel of the Telecaster, the sound of it, the way it plays; it's very well balanced, it does everything in all types of music.'

In the early '90s Fender honoured Burton with his own three-pickup signature model. 'Fender has already built the best two guitars, the Telecaster and the Stratocaster,' he told us in June 1992, 'so I got to thinking what could I add to that, without changing the basic guitar. So what I did was I went to a three pickup, and dropped my third pickup down low. It's a much hotter pickup, so you have no problem with the volume. And I went to a satin finish on the neck, which is real smooth and very fast.

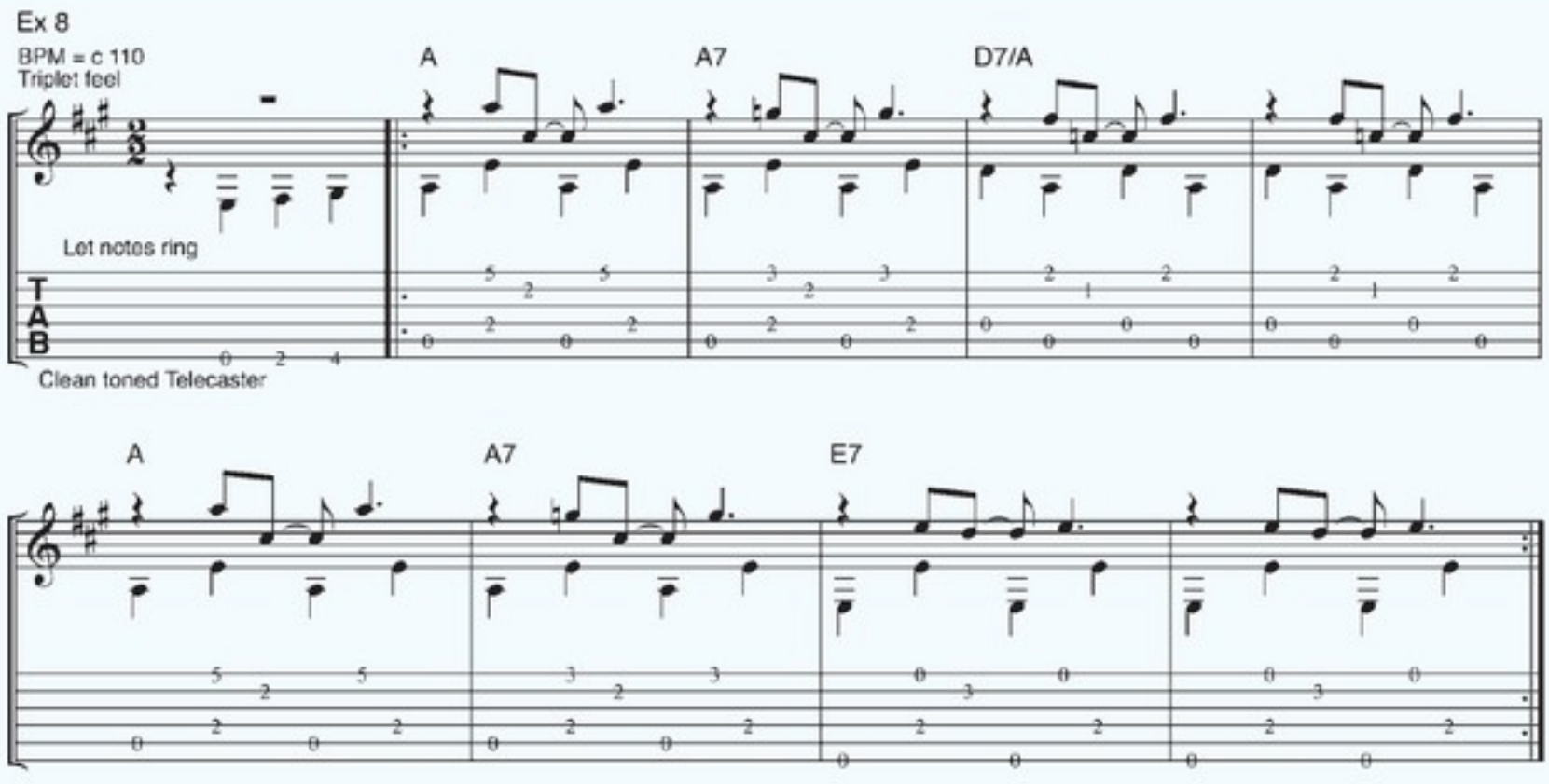
'The amp was as important as the guitar to get the right sound. I used a Fender Deluxe. I had Vibrosonics, a Fender Deluxe, an old Twin. They were pretty hot amps. The old Fender gear… still the best, I guess. You can't top it. They are still trying to build a better amp.'

In the 1950s guitar strings were very heavy, making bending in particular difficult. Burton was forced to experiment to get the desired gauges. 'Basically when I went to work with Ricky [Nelson], I started using banjo strings because the regular guitar strings that you could buy were a little too stiff, so I got to thinking there has got to be an easier way. I started using banjo strings, at first the third and fourth. I used that and I had to decide what to use for the fifth and sixth string. So I went to a regular D guitar string and an A string for the E string. It worked out really well from that, and I had my strings gauged and I came up with the string gauges that I use, which is .009", .010", .012", .024", .032" and .038". It's a very even gauge that stays in tune, believe it or not.'

Ex 7: Chords for Chet Atkins-style picking

This voicing of A adds the fourth finger or pinky on the top string, fifth fret, thus increasing the range compared with the conventional open A chord. This is easily converted into A7 by refingering the top string at the third fret with the second finger. D7/A is simply the basic open D7 chord with the open A string at the bottom of it, and E7 is basic open E plus the pinky on the second string, third fret.

Ex 8: Chet Atkins-style picking

4/4 Time

In the solo in Ricky Nelson's *Hello Mary Lou* Burton uses a fingerpicking technique similar to Chet Atkins', although instead of Chet's thumbpick style Burton used his plectrum/fingerpick method. Try the chord voicings from Exercise 7; all the notes required in the exercise are contained within the chords. After the ascending scalar run in the bass in the opening bar, the plectrum picks a bass part on the beat consisting of either alternate root and fifth notes for the A, A7 and D7/A chords or root and octave for the E7 bar. The middle finger picks a simple melody on strings one and two. Burton's solo may sound immaculately composed, but that's just how good he was. 'My favourite solos just came off the top of my head, like *Hello Mary Lou* and *Fool's Rush In* and *Travelling Man*, all those,' he said.

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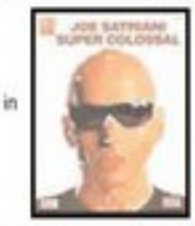

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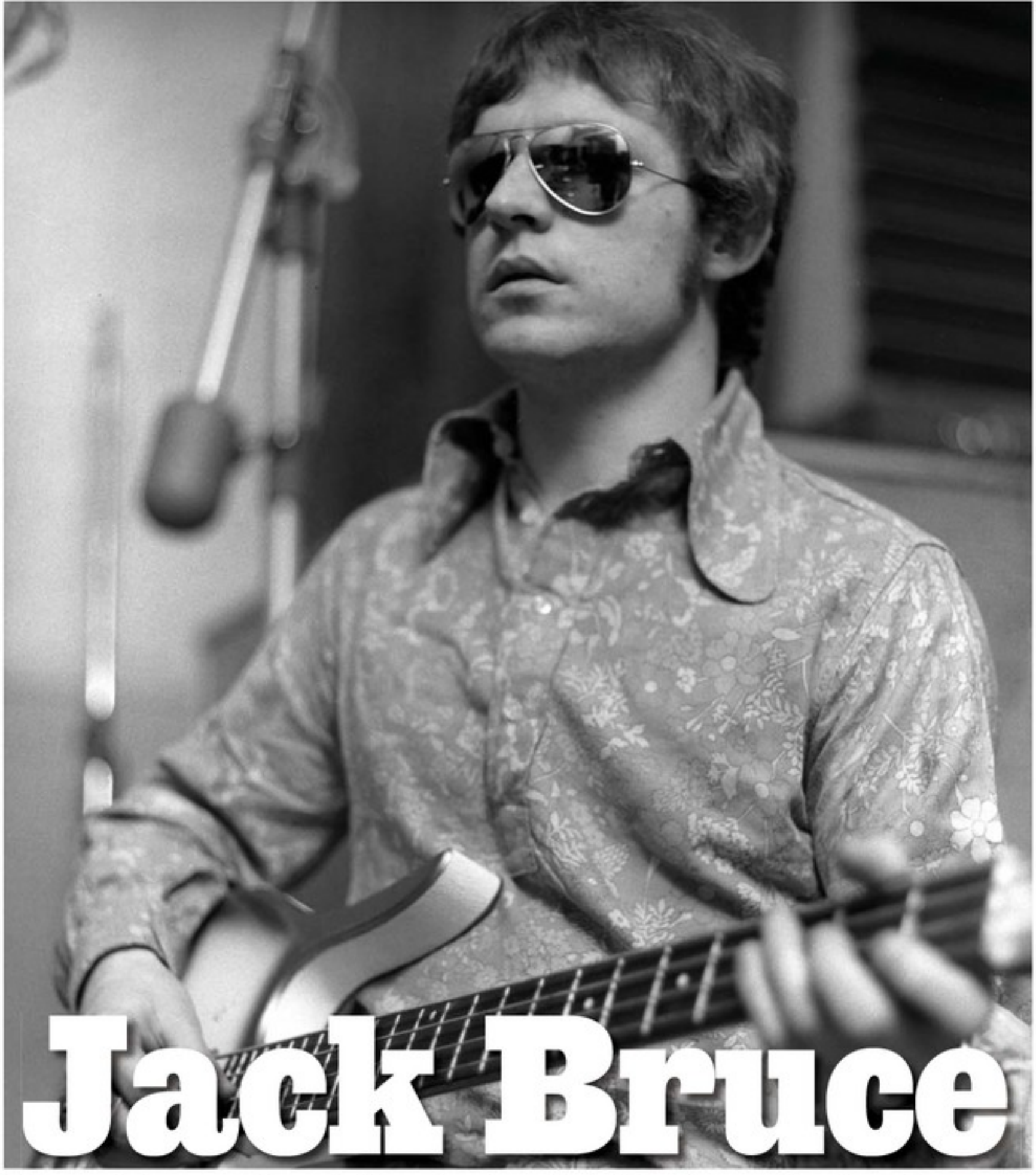


Photo: Chuck Stewart/Redferns

Jack Bruce

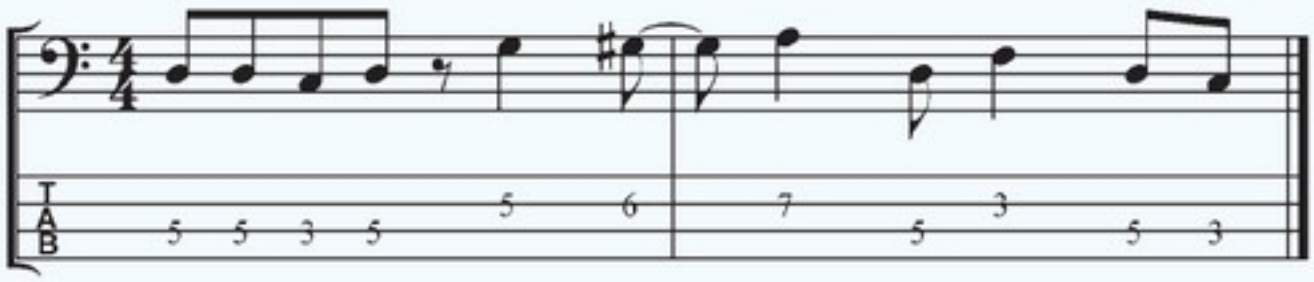
Cream's low-end custodian took us to hitherto unchartered blues-rock territory. Gareth Morgan ventures out with just a torch and his mum's sandwiches to scour the land of Jack Bruce

Techniques Workshop

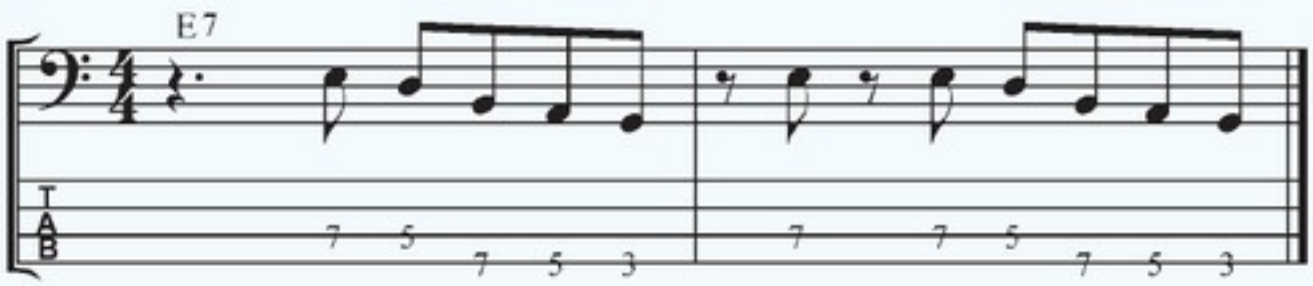
Formed in 1966, Cream comprised three of the most respected musicians at that time: bassist/vocalist Jack Bruce, drummer Ginger Baker and ex-Yardbird Eric Clapton on guitar and vocals. Their comparatively brief existence yielded three studio albums, *Fresh Cream* ('66), *Disraeli Gears* ('67) and *Wheels Of Fire* ('68) with a fourth, *Goodbye* (1969) released some months after the band had split. While the studio offerings were in the main patchy, it was Cream's explosive live performances – featuring extended jam sessions – that really made people sit up and take notice. These are well documented via four live tracks on *Wheels Of Fire* and by the live albums *Volume I* ('70) and *Volume II* ('72). If you ever wondered how a three-minute pop song like *N.S.U.* could morph into a 10-minute opus, *Live Volume I* shows you how in no uncertain terms. Cream split due to the clash of personalities between Bruce and Baker, although this conflict was a major driving force behind the intensity of their live work. The fact that these problems resurfaced when the band – reunited in May 2005 at the Royal Albert Hall – moved on to New York in October 2006 has (probably) robbed many fans of the opportunity of seeing a fantastic band.

Jack Bruce, along with John Entwistle and Paul McCartney, was massively important in widening the horizon for bass playing in a rock and pop context. His jazz background fuelled his fiery, expansive improvisation on first a Fender VI six-string bass (tuned like a guitar but an octave lower) plus occasional Danelectro use (above) and, from *Disraeli Gears* onwards, a Gibson EB-3 with a big, distorted sound, especially live. Bruce's incredible, almost never-ending flow of ideas and his amazing dexterity (which often made it difficult to tell who the soloist in Cream actually was at any given time) mark him out as one of the true all-time greats.

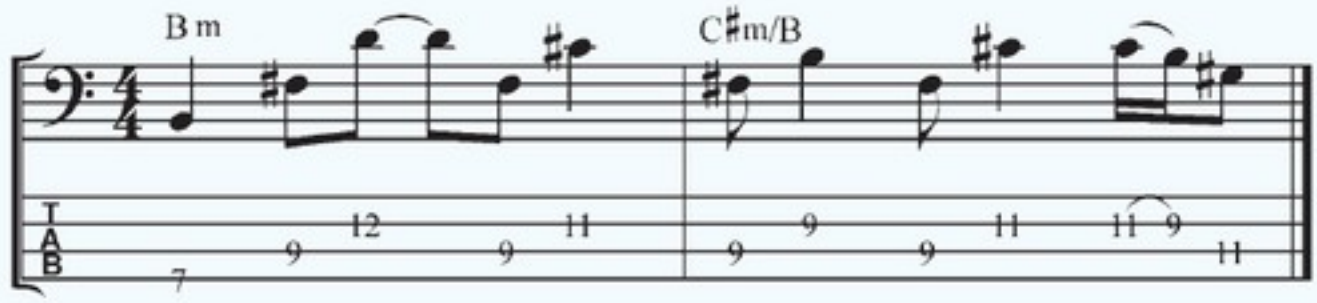
Ex 1: Bring Me Sunshine

4/4 Time

Jack Bruce was responsible for one of *the* classic rock riffs. Cream's biggest hit single *Sunshine Of Your Love* from *Disraeli Gears* is a must-learn riff for any self-respecting rocker. The riff itself is culled from the blues scale and whereas Clapton's guitar version is fairly punchy, Bruce goes for a lazier legato approach to fill a bit more space. Our exercise should give you a decent start on working out its genius.

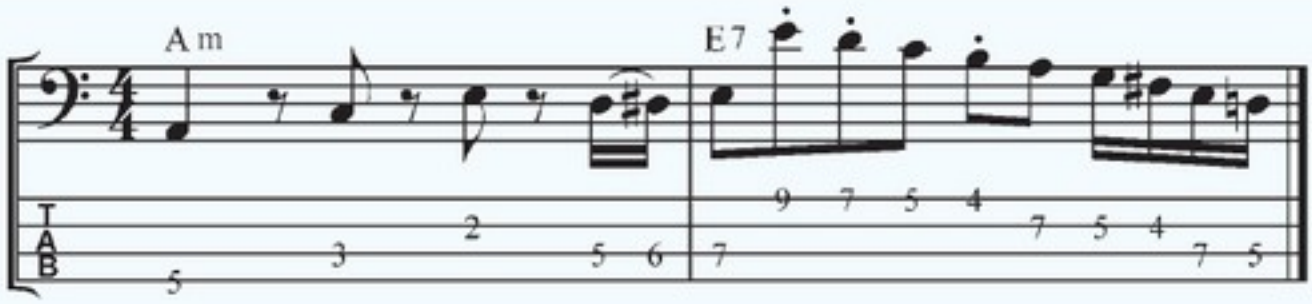
Ex 2: Unfettered Emotion

4/4 Time

Given that much of Bruce's live accompaniment to Clapton's extended soloing forays were as expansive as ol' Slowhand's contribution, the fact that Bruce never recorded a 'feature' bass solo is fairly surprising. But there are examples of bass breaks in a few songs: one of the most famous is from Cream's first hit single, *I Feel Free* (*Fresh Cream*). He plays a catchy little lick in a similar style to our exercise (with a second-time variation) over the vocal breakdown. The note choices follow the minor pentatonic pattern. Use a big, fat tone.

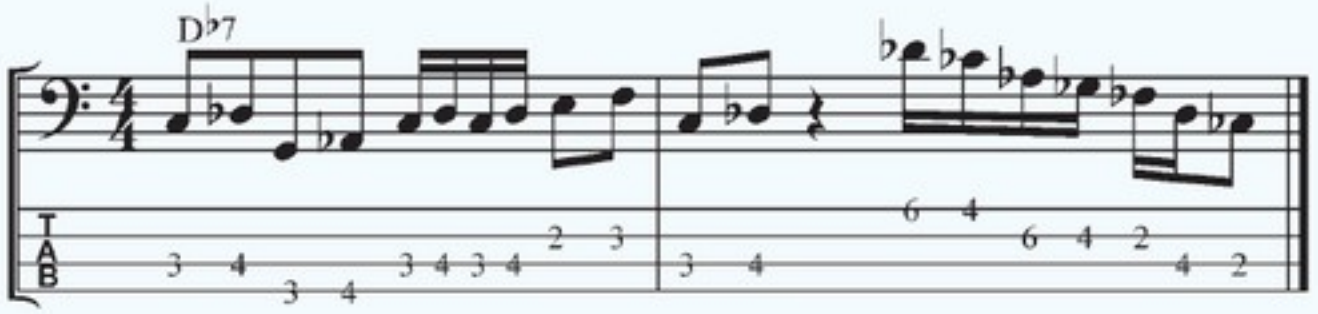
Ex 3: Nocturnal Gyrations

4/4 Time

Just as the beautiful intro hook from The Who's *Getting In Tune* (*Who's Next*) shows an unexpectedly sweet melodic side to John Entwistle's playing (see August 2004 issue), the intro figure to *Dance The Night Away* (*Disraeli Gears*) proves that Bruce wasn't just about aggressive improvisation and distortion. You should get a good idea of the melody's mechanics from this exercise and, while it looks easy, getting the right feel requires long, legato notes. Extract enough volume out of the pull-off lick in bar two may require careful practice.

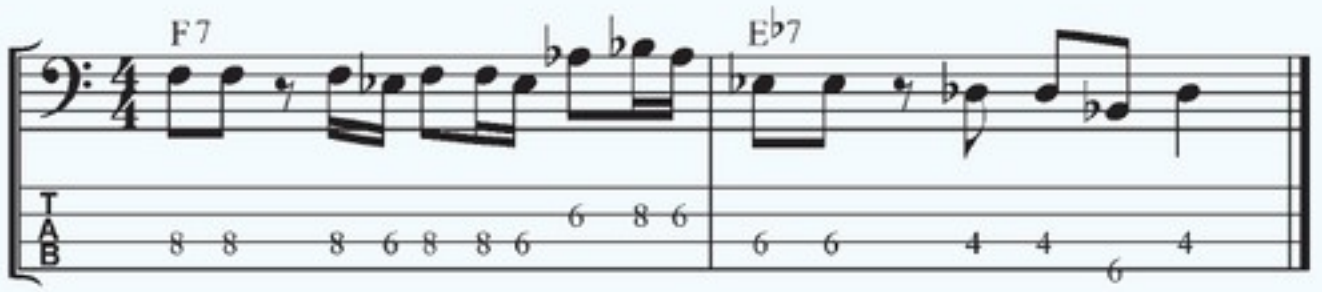
Ex 4: An Emblem of Groove Honour

4/4 Time

Cream's May 2005 set list included two songs the band had never before played live together. One of them was unsurprisingly Ginger Baker's quirky *Pressed Rat And Warthog* (*Wheels Of Fire*) but it might come as a bit of a surprise to discover that *Badge* (*Goodbye*) was the other. *Badge* features another simply but highly effective Bruce intro figure and some scalar fills played with the usual gusto. This example gives you an idea of both of these elements, with the space in bar 1 and care with the enunciation in bar 2 being crucial.

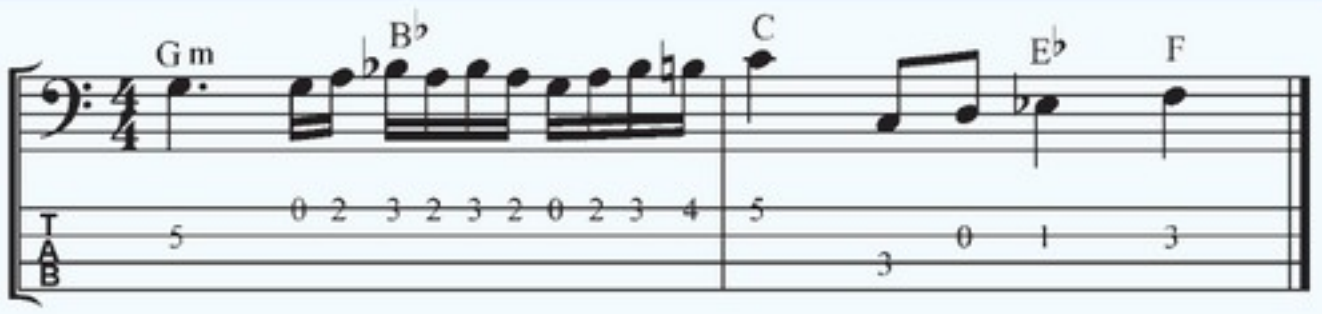
Ex 5: Musical Politics

4/4 Time

For some really quirky Bruce/Clapton unison riffing, listen to the signature semitone riff from *Politician* (from *Wheels Of Fire*), which was actually written as the band warmed up for a BBC session on 9 January, 1968. The first recorded version can be found on *Cream BBC Sessions* (2003). Our example is an interpretation of the riff with typical fill in bar 2, based on the minor pentatonic pattern.

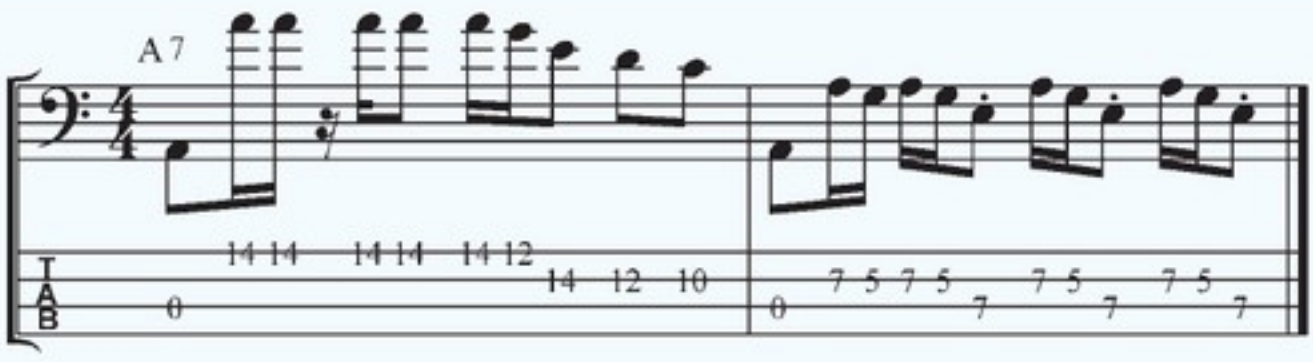
Ex 6: Unusual Liquid Sustenance

4/4 Time

Much of the Cream repertoire was rooted firmly in the blues. Songs such as *Four Until Late* (Fresh Cream) were faithfully reproduced with a fairly traditional feel and offerings like *Spoonful* (*Wheels Of Fire*) developed into mega-improvisational crowd pleasers. On other tunes they adopted a more contemporary approach, with an excellent example being *Strange Brew* (*Disraeli Gears*), with Bruce staying close to the signature lick in the verses before deliver a plethora of killer variations under Clapton's guitar solo.

Ex 7: No Gold Pavements

4/4 Time

When it comes to improvising – whether off-the-cuff or in a more planned environment – many people think they have to play radically different ideas every time, which is palpably untrue. In the studio setting especially, the most effective creative developments of an idea are those that hold on to or return regularly to a recognisable theme. Check out *White Room* (*Wheels Of Fire*), catch the fill at 0:29 and then listen how Bruce develops and expands on this basic idea. This exercise should give you an understanding of the trickier variations.

Ex 8: A Blues Junction

4/4 Time

Finally, a couple of classic Bruce chops for you to sharpen your technique on. Both are based on licks from the live version of *Crossroads* (*Wheels Of Fire*) but the phrase in bar 2 is similar to ones employed in songs such as *I Feel Free* (*Fresh Cream*) and *SWLABR* (*Disraeli Gears*). It involves rapidly alternating between the octave and minor seventh before hitting the fifth with the lick often repeated over a chord change. Bar 1 approximates one of his insane high register fills under Clapton's second solo: great fun but tough to play at tempo.

As well as being Guitar & Bass's bassman in residence, gigging, recording and teaching extensively, Gareth has co-written a book with Tony Bacon about McCartney's bass playing in The Beatles entitled Paul McCartney: Bassmaster, available on amazon.com. If you have any questions about this feature or would like to book a lesson you can e-mail him at bigmogg@rmorgan1.idps.co.uk.

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Back Stage: Did you know this month...

Jimi knocks 'em dead back on home turf at the Monterey festival in '67

Photo Bruce Fleming/Rex Features

18 June 1967: Jimi Hendrix and the Experience play their first US gig at California's Monterey Pop festival. The Who and Hendrix, both still new to the American public, were two of the last acts on the Sunday. Fearful of being upstaged, neither wanted to go on first. A coin was tossed, The Who won, and Jimi was forced to follow a bombastic set culminating in Townshend violently destroying his guitar. Hendrix responded by pulling out all his tricks – playing behind his back, with his teeth, and through his new Roger Mayer pedals. The lighter fluid came out after *Wild Thing* and the blazing Strat was smashed, sealing one of *the* classic nights of spectacular rock theatrics.

19 June 1987: Guns N'Roses play their first UK gig at the Marquee Club in London. Preview copies of the forthcoming debut LP *Appetite For Destruction* had caused much anticipation when the band arrived in the capital, but the show was, well, less then triumphant: beer cans were lobbed at a posturing Axl Rose, and one disappointed reviewer bemoaned that the new tunes came across like 'Aerosmith outtakes with the odd hint of Rose Tattoo'.

24 June 2004: Blackie becomes the most expensive guitar in the world. Clapton's most famous Stratocaster sold at Christie's auction house in New York for £564,412 with the proceeds going towards Eric's Crossroads addiction clinic. Another Strat, signed by a host of music legends, has since sold at a charity auction for a staggering $2.7 million; that guitar, though, was acting as a fundraiser for the tsunami charity Reach Out To Asia, so the instrument itself was fairly incidental.

10 June 1967: blues mentor John Mayall finds himself looking for another protégé. Mayall runs an ad in the 'musicians wanted' section of the *Melody Maker* for 'a lead guitarist to match the brilliant blues standards set by Eric Clapton and Peter Green (BB King and Otis Rush style)'. After seeing many who didn't make the grade, a young baby-faced Mick Taylor – future Stones lead man – turns up bereft of an instrument and wins the coveted Bluesbreakers spot by auditioning on one of Mayall's guitars.

19-20 June 1937: Robert Johnson makes his second and final recordings, this time at the Brunswick Records building in Dallas, Texas. It was so hot in Dallas around that time of year that some musicians were known to record in their underwear. As far as we know Johnson kept his clothes on while he recorded 19 timeless tracks including *Hellhound On My Trail*, *Stop Breaking Down Blues* and *Love In Vain*. The American Record Corporation probably paid Johnson just $10-$15 for each song, with no royalties at all.

June 22 1955: Gibson patents the humbucker. Seth Lover was the man who built the first pickup that didn't hum. He connected two single-coils in series with the coils out of phase with each other, which meant the signal noise of one coil was cancelled by the noise of the other. The pickup appeared on Gibson's steel guitars in 1956 and then on regular electrics like the Les Paul by 1957. 'Patent Applied For' was written on stickers underneath, giving 'PAF' to the guitar vocabulary.

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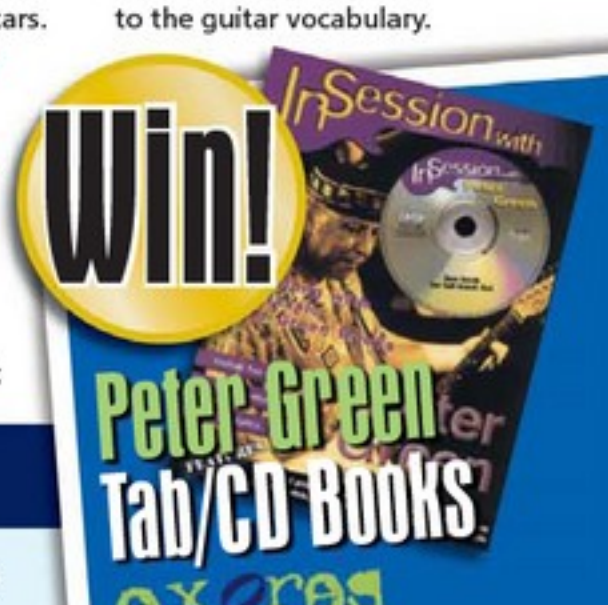
■ **Buying the guitar you always thought looked and sounded cool but couldn't afford.** No, looks don't matter, but if you play the guitar, play one you like. What else are you going to spend your money on? Stupid amounts of petrol for the 4x4? Another pair of designer sunglasses? Gold teeth?

Next month – 5 things more satisfying than a deep-fried Mars Bar...



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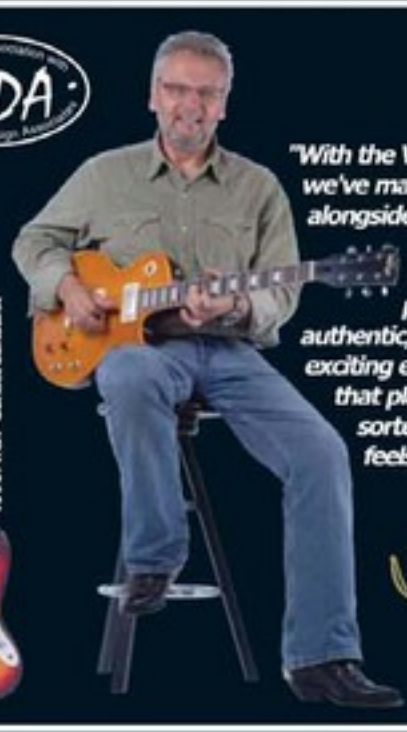

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